Hafa Adai!

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POLL RESULTS

New Year's Eve celebration: Eat out or stay in?

Eat out	29
Stay in	111
A little of both	35

Sunday, January 03, 2010

INSIDE

Drug Lord Caught

Mexican police have captured alleged drug lord Carlos Beltran Leyva, just two weeks after his even more powerful brother was killed in a shootout with troops–back-to-back victories in President Felipe Calderon's drug war.

World...Page 17

Real Hero

After a run of celebrity grand marshals, a real American hero led the Rose Parade on Friday.

Life & Style...Page 19

Lawmakers weigh options after 16th Legislature

» Balanced budget, transparency top wishes for incoming House, Senate

Palacios

Pangelinan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

At least 16 of the 29 members of the 16th Legislature who did not seek reelection or who lost their re-election bid are now weighing their options, including going back to private sector jobs, putting up their own business, or assuming other government posts. Some are just about ready to go into retirement but most of them will still be active in the community.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) said he will focus on family life and seek other opportunities, but he said that politics is always an option.

"I will also still be involved in social and community

See LAWMAKERS on Page 4

Zhao Guang Ming, left, and his wife Zhang Haihong pose with their son, Richard Zhao, the first baby to be born in the CNMI in 2010, during an interview yesterday afternoon. The boy was born on Jan. 2 at 4:29pm at the Commonwealth Health Center.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

6-lb boy is CNMI's New Year baby

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

On Jan. 2, a 39-year-old Chinese woman gave birth to a healthy baby boy, making him the islands' New Year baby.

Department of Public Health records showed that no birth was recorded on New Year's Day, which made Baby Richard the first baby born in the Commonwealth in 2010.

The 6-lb. baby is the second child of couple Zhang Haihong, 39, and Zhao

See BABY on Page 4

Inaccuracies of NMC midterm report disclosed

RELATED NEWS

- Two groups express support for embattled Fernandez PAGE 2
- NMC names new language chair PAGE 3

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas College Faculty Senate president Larry Lee disclosed to the Board of Regents on Wednesday that there were inaccurate information incor-

See NMC on Page 4

Teenaged girl killed in Tinian moped crash

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A teenaged girl died while another juvenile was injured when two mopeds crashed in San Jose, Tinian Saturday afternoon.

Department of Public Safety spokes-

See GIRL KILLED on Page 4

Supreme Court frees lawyers Atalig, Yana. PAGE 5
Women help patients heal through music. PAGE 6

Local

Two groups express support for embattled Fernandez

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

If the Faculty Senate and Faculty Assembly of Northern Marianas College gave a no confidence vote on the leadership of Dr. Carmen Fernandez, two equally important organizations of the college expressed full support to the college president.

Fernandez

Joyce Taro, president of the NMC staff senate and Miles Rodriguez, president of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, extended their support to the embattled president during the board meeting Wednesday night.

Taro, in her emotional appeal to the board of regents, cited the insensitivity of people in and outside the campus in pointing their fingers at the president who she described as having done everything to reaffirm the institution's accreditation.

"This is very sad. They want to terminate the president because some people are not happy? This is not about you… or them…but the institution. Dr. Fernandez is only respecting the policy in place and what's the problem with that? This is full of [expletive]! And I am sick and tired of it," Taro, in a high pitch, addressed the newly elected Board of Regents.

Taro admitted that although she has a lot disagreements with the president, she said Fernandez always addresses issues in accordance with NMC policy.

Taro reported that the staff senate met on Dec. 28 and adopted a resolution supporting the incumbent president.

"The staff senate continues to support the president by providing opportunities for open communication between the president and staff members in addressing issues and concerns brought up by the staff," Taro's report stated.

She added that the staff senate is also ready to take a positive and proactive stance in helping the president and fellow staff members in resolving issues brought to its attention.

"Through our staff senate mission statement, we will strive to fulfill our college's mission and goals to better our institution," she added.

Associated Students president Miles Rodriguez, for her part, clarified to the board that although many students were disappointed on the non-renewal of longtime instructor

See FERNANDEZ on Page 4

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Sonya Palacios Pangelinan Dancoe
PASSES THE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING (P.E.) EXAM
Sonya P. Dancoe, daughter of Alfred K. & Cil P. Pangelinan of Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, successfully passes the Professional Engineering Exam administered by the National Council of Engineering Examiners and Surveying (NCEES).
Sonya is currently a Civil Engineer of Southwest Solar Technology in Phoenix, Arizona and working on renewable energy projects.
Sonya received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan and an Alumni of Mount Carmel School.
Ms. Dancoe is married to Curtis Dancoe and has two kids, Dalton and Vanessa.
CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES IN YOUR ENDEAVOR FROM YOUR FAMILIES IN SAIPAN AND ABROAD. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NMC names new language chair

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of the five vacant positions for chairpersons at Northern Marianas College was filled Thursday when the college named James Thomas Kline as the new chairperson of the Languages and Humanities Department.

Most recently, Kline served as an adjunct instructor for the humanities program at the Pacifica Graduate Institute in California. At this institution, Kline taught hybrid courses online and residency components in depth psychology, cinema, and mythology and folklore.

NMC said Kline also created, structured, and delivered course content in online format called WebCT and D26. In addition, the new department chair has also worked as an adjunct instructor at the Humanities Division at Mt. Hood Community College where he taught a variety of English Writing and Genre Studies courses; basic writing skills; introductions to expository writing; English composition; critical thinking; research essay writing; technical report writing; genre studies-detective fiction; and provide counseling and guidance for students regarding class assignments.

Saipan Tribune learned that Kline also worked as a university bookstore manager for Follet Higher Education Group, which manages more than 850 bookstores nationwide and provides management systems, support services, and textbooks to over 1,800 independently managed bookstores.

The newly hired official also possesses years of freelance experience, having written a number of magazine and newspaper articles and authored extensive research articles. He also published a book on a personal hero of his: Buster Keaton, an American comic and actor best known for his silent films. The book is entitled, "*The Complete Films of Buster Keaton*."

Kline said working for NMC is a dream come true for him.

"Working at NMC is a dream job for me because it allows me to devote all my professional skills to education. I'm excited to take on this new challenge," said Kline, adding that "It is a fantastic opportunity to expand my professional career and to apply the knowledge and skills that I've accumulated over the years."

Kline received his master's degree in creative writing from Antioch University in Los Angeles and his bachelor's degree from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez told *Saipan Tribune* that she is very pleased working with Kline.

"We are pleased to welcome James to the NMC Family. His professional background and extensive knowledge greatly benefit our students," Fernandez said.

Kline replaces Mark Haag. The former department chair's contract was not renewed along with Glenn Keaton of the Department of Math and Sciences.

NMC has three deans and six academic departments. At present, one vacancy was announced in the dean position after student services dean Janice Tenorio resigned from her post while only one of the six department chairs is serving in permanent position, Frank Sobolewski of the Department of Social Sciences and Fine Arts.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The newly hired languages and humanities department chairperson James Thomas Kline met with Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez last week.

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BABY

From Page 1

Guang Ming, 42. Their first child is a girl and now 14 years old.

The New Year baby's parents are Chinese nationals who are taking a one-year computer course at the International Business Professional College.

In a visit to the hospital last Saturday, Zhang Haihong was still in the delivery room at about 2pm. She finally gave birth to her bouncing baby boy at 4:29pm. Her delivery was administered by midwife/nurse Mereia Sovaroa.

The two are expected to be discharged from the hospital 4pm yesterday.

In an interview with the parents yesterday, both expressed their happiness upon seeing their "angel."

They said they plan to bring the newborn in their hometown in Beijing, China after completing their computer course here. They added that they are both excited to be reunited with their family back home and introduce the newest member of their family to relatives.

Saipan Tribune learned that hospital staff was initially expecting to have a New Year Baby on the eve of Dec. 31, but disclosed that the baby girl, Lani Lane Tarope, was delivered less than an hour before midnight or 11:19pm.

Zero injuries on New Year's Eve

Besides the zero record of birth since the start of New Year's Eve revelry, the hospital also indicated that there were no victims of firecracker-related incidents in Jan. 1.

CHC nursing supervisor Gayline Blau confirmed to *Saipan Tribune* last Friday that as of 4pm on Jan. 1, no one was admitted to the emergency room for treatment for firecracker injuries.

This, she said, is probably because either the community members are more aware of the safety issues this time or there were minor injuries that were not reported to the hospital.

"This is good news … because we maintained the zero injury record since Christmas Day," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

The nursing supervisor said all staff for the emergency room were on standby to provide immediate treatment.

Blau said four nurses and two doctors are assigned for each shift at the ER.

GIRL KILLED

From Page 1

man Eric David said Tinian DPS will send to him today, Monday, the report about the accident.

David said initial information he gathered was that the fatality is a local girl.

"They were riding mopeds and they crashed," David said.

When asked if alcohol or speed was a factor, the DPS spokesman said "it's unclear."

The teenager is the first vehicular fatality in the CNMI for 2010. For 2009, six people were killed in vehicular crash incidents in the Commonwealth.

All of those happened on Saipan. The last accident of the year left a man and his son killed, while seven others were injured during a vehicular collision that involved three vehicles along Middle Road in Chalan Laulau on Nov. 1.

Tinian DPS director Joe King in a telephone interview with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday said the crash happened near the Island Garden Restaurant.

King said the girl is 15 or 16 years old. He said the teenaged boy suffered minor injuries.

King said the girl and her friend were driving rented scooters and heading west toward Broadway Estate Road.

"Just before the stop sign I believed they lost control," said the director, adding that it was not raining at the time.

King said the victims are minors so he is quite sure alcohol was not involved.

"But still it's under investigation," he stressed.

King said except for the moped crash, the New Year's Eve and Day celebrations on Tinian went on peacefully as no firecracker-related injury was reported.

FERNANDEZ

From Page 2

Sam McPhetres, their disappointment doesn't extend to the other decisions of Fernandez at NMC.

"Most students are unsatisfied with Mr. McPhetres' non-renewal, but this doesn't mean that we're dissatisfied with the whole administration…" she said.

Rodriguez said in a recent informal assembly of officers of ASNMC, they voted to give their full support to Fernandez.

"We believe that her decisions are for the best interest of the college…and we're testament to her sacrifices to get our accreditation," the student leader said.

Newly elected board chairperson Janet King pointed out that Rodriguez, being the representative of over 950 students, is the most important regent of NMC.

She instructed the student leader to make the informal gathering a "formal event" so more students could participate and freely convey their message and concerns.

NMC

From Page 1

porated in the college midterm report that was submitted to Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Faculty Senate met with Dr. Sherrill Amador as part of the WASC accreditation midterm visit last Oct. 26 where several members expressed their concerns with the many inaccurate and false statements contained in the said report.

Lee's report specifically cited page 3 of the NMC midterm report where he stated that it was not prepared with considerable input and participation from the college community.

The Faculty Senate disclosed that the report was prepared by a consultant hired by NMC to complete the accreditation documents.

"Dr. Amador was visibly shocked to learn that the report was prepared by a consultant," Lee's report to the board indicated.

On the report's page 4, the faculty senate president said it is not also true that the college has an increasingly stable and qualified administrative team.

Lee said that in the past two years, since Dr. Carmen Fernandez was hired, the college has had three academic deans, three student services deans, three chief financial officers, three directors of institutional effectiveness, three admission directors, two librarian directors, three bookstore managers, and several non-renewed department chairs.

The report indicated that there is a total turnover of over 20 leadership positions.

On page 26 of the report, the clarification of the distinction between a grievance and a complaint was never shared with all concerned parties at the time the report was submitted.

During the team visit in October, *Saipan Tribune* learned that Dr. Amador directly asked faculty senate members: "Do you feel this midterm report accurately describes the current situation at NMC?"

Lee said the response to the question was a resounding "no."

'Decline in academic quality'

In the same report submitted to the board, Lee said the Faculty Senate—based on the actions taken in all its meetings—aired its concerns regarding the decline in academic quality with the dean of academic programs and services Cynthia Deleon Guerrero.

These involved the five vacancies in the department chair positions—out of the total six programs.

Members also cited the concern over the unreasonable justification for not hiring the top recommendation for the business department chair wherein the said top candidate was described by the president as "unsuitable" for the job.

Lee also reported the presence of the excessive teaching overload of several faculty members. *Saipan Tribune* learned that a regular contractual teaching load is 15 credits per semester. However, this past Fall semester one instructor was assigned to teach 29 credits, one for 30 credits, and another one teaching 32 credits—or more than double the normal workload.

The report also disclosed that there were class instructions in the four sections of BI 101 Principles of Biology this past Fall semester that were delayed for three weeks due to the lack of an instructor.

A concern on the hiring of unqualified full-time instructors and adjuncts, most especially hiring a person with a bachelor's degree in sociology and no post-secondary teaching experience to teach physical science, was also raised to the board's attention.

Lee also cited the termination of a full-time physical science instructor after the start of the semester resulting in his classes being delayed for four weeks.

LAWMAKERS

From Page 1

causes, like resource management," Palacios, 54, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Palacios, who served on the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th legislatures, said he will be president of A&M Corp., a business which he co-owns with his wife.

Palacios ran as lieutenant governor in the November elections along with Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider (R-Saipan) who ran as governor, but they lost to incumbent Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos of the Covenant Party.

"I have a very challenging and at the same time humbling experience in the 16th Legislature. We've come face to face with economic challenges but it's rewarding to have consensus among colleagues regardless of political affiliations. I think that despite the difficulties, we did well," he said.

The speaker also said that having "new minds" in the 16th Legislature like Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Rosemond Santos (R-Saipan), and Rep. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) gave a "breath of fresh air," but he also cited his high respect for senior lawmakers like Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan) and Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan).

Under Palacios' term as speaker, he worked with three former House speakers: Hofschneider, Babauta, and Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan).

'More time with family'

Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan), in a separate phone interview, said he is still weighing his options but he said that members of the 17th Legislature asked for his continued advice and guidance.

"Right now I will be spending more time with my family, and attend to my small ranch in Papago for the time being. I may join the private sector again, which I love doing, focusing on customer service and improving efficiency of big corporations," said Babauta, who served from the 9th to the 16th Legislatures.

He served as floor leader on the 12th and 14th Legislatures when Fitial was House speaker. He served as House speaker on the 15th Legislature.

Rep. David Apatang (R-Saipan) said he will "retire from politics" after serving 10 years in the Legislature.

"I will take care of my health and family. I have six kids and many grandkids," he said, adding that he will be going back and forth Seattle.

Apatang, 61, served on the 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th and 16th legislatures. Prior to being a lawmaker, he served in the Department of Finance's Procurement and Supply Division.

"I really enjoyed serving the people of the CNMI, especially my precinct. It's been a challenging experience as a politician and I wish the 17th Legislature that everything will be better this year," he added.

Sen. Maria "Frica" Pangelinan (D-Saipan), who currently chairs the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, said she will be going off-island after the 16th Legislature.

"My first two years was a positive learning experience working with knowledgeable legislators. I wish for both Houses to work together in the interests of the people they represent," she said.

'Resiliency, character'

Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), who has been instrumental in re-applying the Open Government Act to the Legislature and in effectively suing the Fitial administration for not releasing financial records related to the federalization lawsuit, said she would like to stay and work in the CNMI and remain active in the community in the immediate term, but would eventually like to go back to school.

Sablan, who lost her senatorial bid in November, said she thinks that that the CNMI's resilience and character as a community have been tested in extraordinary ways these past two years.

"For me personally, I can say that these past two years have certainly been some of the most challenging and rewarding of my life. I am grateful for having had the privilege of serving in this office, and I am looking forward to life after the 16th legislature," she said.

She hopes that the 17th Legislature will "1) pass a balanced budget; 2) welcome meaningful debates, diverse opinions, and independent thinking; 3) practice transparency and be committed to fully and meaningfully applying the Open Government Act to the Legislature; 4) hold more public hearings and produce more substantive legislation and committee reports; 5) do a better job of scrutinizing board nominations by the governor; and 6) take seriously its vital role as the second branch of government and appropriately check and balance the powers of the other two branches—the executive branch, in particular."

"I have always hoped for these qualities in the Legislature, and always will—for the 17th Legislature, and also every legislature after that. Better governance is always possible with every legislature, as long as there are people within and outside the legislature who are committed to it," she added.

'Never say never'

Sen. Paterno Hocog (R-Rota) said he will pursue private sector life after the 16th Legislature.

"I will stay on the island I love most—Rota," he said, adding that he will spend more time with his hobbies which are farming and fishing.

Hocog, 53, spent 23 years with the Department of Public Safety before retiring for four years. He then served on the 13th to the 16th Legislatures.

"In politics, you 'never say never.' Let's see what the future will be," he added.

Rep. Joe Reyes (R-Saipan) said he will devote his time on his business, Milne & Reyes Enterprises, as president. But he said he will also venture into something else.

"But I will still be working on putting up a memorial for Boy Scouts in San Antonio and do more community services," he said.

Reyes, 57, is a former chairman of the Republican Party during the term of former Gov. Juan N. Babauta. Reyes, along with David Sablan Jr. of Guam and Fred Radewagen and his wife Amata, was instrumental in making sure that the Republican Party in the CNMI would be admitted into the Republican National Committee.

"I will always be involved in politics in one way or another. I hate to see our membership into the Republican National Committee collapse. I wish the Democrats here would also work into being a member of the national Democratic party," Reyes added.

Rep. Rosemond Santos (R-Saipan) said she will go back as a prosecutor at the Office of the Attorney General. She served at the OAG for three and a half years before running as a member of the 16th House of Representatives.

"I will start as early as next week," she said, adding that she enjoyed working with the Legislative Bureau staff and reaching out to people.

Sen. Joseph Mendiola (Cov-Tinian) said he is still weighing his options but he said in the immediate term, he will be able to spend much time with his family on Tinian, as well as spend time on his hobbies of fishing and farming.

"I will either go back to business or find another job. Of course, politics will always be an option in the near future," he said.

Mendiola, 48, served on the 14th to 16th Legislatures.

"I will miss the challenges of trying to fund solutions for the problems we're facing. I will also miss the people I worked with in the Legislature," he added.

Supreme Court frees lawyers Atalig, Yana

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

After spending almost two years in jail for civil contempt of court, the CNMI Supreme Court temporarily freed lawyers Antonio Atalig and Reynaldo Yana.

Saipan Tribune learned that Atalig and Yana got their freedom last Dec. 24 or on Christmas Eve after CNMI Supreme Court associate justice John A. Manglona issued an order staying Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo's judgment.

Atalig and Yana have been in jail since March 2008 after Govendo found them in civil contempt for failing to return the $1.3 million in attorneys' fees that the two lawyers received from the Angel Malite estate.

Saipan Tribune spotted Atalig buying grocery items at Joeten Dandan last Dec. 31 or on New Year's Eve. He said he and Yana were out on jail on Dec. 24.

Atalig

In a telephone interview with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, Yana confirmed that he and Atalig were released from the Department of Corrections because of the Supreme Court's ruling.

Yana said the Supreme Court reached a decision because of their pending appeal.

"The law is very clear. We can only stay in jail for six months for contempt of court," he said.

Yana

Yana said he and Atalig have been in jail for more than a year already. He said they will be out until the Supreme Court issues its decision on their appeal.

The lawyer said there's no hearing yet because they have to submit their briefs to the court.

"I'm glad that I'm released. It's bad but also at the same time we (he and Atalig) are more in close contact with God. We have devoted our time praying most of the time," said Yana who is turning 66 this month.

On Jan. 28, 2009 Govendo ordered the continued detention of Yana and Atalig as he denied them attorneys' fees. Govendo instead ruled that the two lawyers owed $1.3 million to the Malite estate.

Govendo said the two lawyers owed $1,288,500 to the Malite estate for not returning the attorneys' fees they got from the estate.

Govendo said Atalig is to be imprisoned until he disgorges attorneys' fees in the amount of $500,000.

The judge said Yana is to be jailed until he disgorges attorneys' fees in the amount of $200,000.

Govendo said upon their release from DOC, after having paid their respective amounts as ordered, Atalig and Yana shall then repay the remainder owed to the Malite estate, until the full amount of $1,288,500 has been repaid.

Last August, Govendo authorized the co-administrators of the Malite estate to retain a law firm of F. Matthew Smith to assist the estate in the collection of $1.3 million judgment against Atalig and Yana.

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Women help patients heal through music

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For three teens and their mothers, Sunday afternoons are better spent playing free classical music, jazz, hymns, and pop songs for patients, hospital visitors and anyone who happens to pass by the Children and Family Clinic ward of the Commonwealth Health Center in Garapan.

Han Young Mi, a pianist and mother of two of three volunteer musicians, said yesterday that it's always been her dream to play music for patients.

"I believe in the power of music to heal. I believe in music therapy," the 46-year-old mother told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, as her two daughters and their friend played music at the hospital.

Haelin Kim, 18, her sister Milin Kim, 16, and their friend Min Joo, 16, play their music at CHC every Sunday, from 2pm to 3pm, while their mothers patiently watch and listen.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

The three plan to play music at different sections of the hospital as well as tour other islands to play for hospital patients.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

From left, 18-year-old Haelin Kim plays the cello, while her sister Milin Kim, 16, plays the violin, and their friend Min Joo, 16, plays the keyboard for patients and visitors at the Commonwealth Health Center yesterday afternoon.

"It feels great playing music for the patients. It feels good that you know you help them heal through music. It also makes you practice more if you know people enjoy listening to your music," said Joo, who plays the keyboard. Her mother, Byung Nam Lee, 48, always went with her and her friends when they play at CHC.

Haeilim Kim, 18, said she started playing the cello when she was 7 years old but had to stop when she moved to Saipan because there was no available teacher.

She again pursued playing the cello when she went back to New Zealand, where she won awards and bagged scholarships for her musical talent.

She also won in the Tumon Bay music festival in April 2009 for her solo cello performance. When she was attending Saipan Southern High School, she formed a string ensemble with three other violinists.

"I am interested in music therapy. Music can help people heal. It's great to help people feel happiness and calmness through soothing music," she said.

Her mother, Mi, owns the Yonsei Academy and directs their musical performances.

Mi said they plan to play music at different sections of the hospital. They also plan to tour other islands to play for hospital patients on Tinian, Rota, and Guam.

Ex-Tinian CUC director given more time to prepare trial in 'ice' case

The federal court has given more time to prepare for trial a former Tinian Commonwealth Utilities Corp. resident director who is facing trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" charges.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Wiseman granted Edward K. Quichocho's motion to waive speedy trial.

Wiseman ordered that the jury trial would commence on March 15, 2010 at 9am.

The court originally set the jury trial for Jan. 11, 2010 at 9am.

But Quichocho, through counsel Michael Dotts, informed the court he needed enough time to prepare for the trial.

The 50-year-old pleaded not guilty to the indictment charging him with one count of distribution of a controlled substance and to one count of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

According to the indictment, Quichocho distributed .037 actual grams of "ice" on April 19, 2008.

Drug Enforcement Administration agents arrested the CUC official on Tinian last Nov. 10. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Family of electrocuted man settles with CUC

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has entered a confidential settlement with the family of a man who was electrocuted while picking breadfruit using a metal pipe in Chalan Kanoa.

According to documents filed in the Superior Court, CUC is aware of a confidential wrongful death settlement with the family of the deceased Hal Basilio Ogarto Taitano.

On Dec. 26, 2008, Taitano climbed up the breadfruit tree inside a private residence to pick the edible fruit. The metal pipe he was carrying accidentally touched the live wire, causing his instant death.

Taitano is survived by his wife, Veronica Miguel Taitano, as well as three children.

CUC, through counsels Deborah Fisher and Timothy Connor, brings probate proceeding in order to facilitate settlement and distribution of the settlement to Mr. Taitano's surviving family.

CUC believes that there are no known creditors of Taitano, with the possible exemption of a family loan.

Mrs. Taitano has acknowledged the contents of CUC's petition for letter of administration of Taitano's estate and asked that Taitano's cousin, Concepcion Ogarto, be appointed as the estate's administratrix.

The Superior Court's clerk of court set a hearing on the petition for Feb. 2, 2010 at 1:30pm.

The clerk of court has notified all persons interested to appear at the hearing and explain, if any, why the order appointing Concepcion Ogarto as administratrix should not be made.

Chamber installation dinner this Saturday

The 2010 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner will be held poolside at the Hyatt Regency Saipan on the evening of Saturday, Jan. 9, starting at 6pm.

The evening's keynote speaker will be Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, the Commonwealth's first elected member of the United States Congress.

Each year, the Chamber announces the recipient of its Businessperson of the Year award at the Installation Dinner.

This year's nominees are: James Arenovski, president of Delta Management Corporation Saipan and Principal of Island Training Solutions; Vicente "Ben" Babauta, assistant general manager for operations of DFS Saipan, Ltd.; and Phillip Mendiola-Long, vice president of Bridge Investment Group and owner, managing director of Sherman Consulting, LLC.

Nominees must be residents of the Commonwealth and members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce. A panel of past recipients evaluates nominees on the basis of criteria such as community involvement, contributions to the community, support for local workforce, and participation in the Chamber.

Past recipients include: Kathryn Barry of KB Communications, K.J. Kim of Asiana Airlines; Juan Guerrero of Juan T. Guerrero & Associates; David M. Sablan, Sr. of Century Insurance; mark Erwin of Continental Airlines; Jerry Tan of Tans Holdings; Alex Sablan of Saipan Shipping; Jay Jones of Triple J Enterprises; Wendi Herring of Pacific Islands Club; Marian Aldan-Pierce of DFS; Joe Ayuyu of McDonald's; Ed Camacho of the Financial & Insurance Service Group; and Efrain Camacho of EFC Engineers & Architects.

The evening will include a multi-course plated dinner, musical entertainment, and a silent auction- the proceeds of which will benefit the Chamber's Education Scholarship Fund and other educational endeavors. Last year, the silent auction raised over $5,000, which helped enable the Chamber to award six $1,500 scholarships to deserving college-bound high school seniors from Saipan as well as two $1,500 scholarships for students of the Northern Marianas Trades Institute, in recognition of the important role the vocational school plays in helping our local workforce retool in response to the changing demands of both the public and private sectors.

Entrance to the Installation Dinner is $50 per person and reservations must be made in advance by calling the Chamber office at 233-7150.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has approximately 150 members, ranging from individuals and small companies in the Pacific region. The Chamber regularly appears before and works with government agencies, elected officials, and other business and civic organizations to improve the business climate economic and civic development of our islands. The Chamber not only promotes and protects business interests and general health and welfare of the Commonwealth Community as a whole. Aside from serving as advocate for the business community, the Chamber annually awards college scholarship funds to deserving Commonwealth high school seniors; members have collectively hosted hundreds of visiting military personnel through the Invite-a-Sailor, program. And its forums and workshops have educated and informed thousands of members and non-members on diverse topics that affect our businesses, our economy and our community. ***(PR)***

Babauta

Arenovski

Mendiola-Long

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP10-CHC-030

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 19, 2010 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"REGISTERED DIETITIAN (CLINICAL/RENAL) FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP IS DUE NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, THURSDAY, JANUARY 07, 2010.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB10-CGC-031 (1-3)

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 13, 2010 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"LEASE OF THREE (3) OFFICE SPACES
(1) - SAIPAN BRANCH
(2) - ROTA BRANCH
(3) TINIAN BRACH
FOR THE COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFIC EOF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THIS IS FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23, ARTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A) - (D).

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

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[2] $500 minimum opening deposit required. Monthly service fee waived with qualifying balances.
[3] When you sign up for a Bank of Hawaii Visa Check Card with your new Bankohana Checking account, you will receive a $20 Shell gift certificate. Limit one offer per account; one per customer. Some restrictions apply. Not applicable to existing Bankohana customers. Offer good through February 14, 2010.

Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 13, 14

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival showcases locally prepared food products, arts and crafts, and island-style entertainment.

One of the Northern Mariana Islands' most popular celebrations—the 7th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival—will be held on Feb. 13 and 14 at Tachogna Beach on the beautiful island of Tinian.

This cultural celebration of Tinian's internationally coveted spicy pepper, locally known as donni sali, showcases locally prepared food products, arts and crafts, and island style entertainment by Northern Marianas young singers, band members, and dancers.

Visitors can compete in a variety of competitions, including the challenging Hot Pepper Eating Contest, and the "Estofao Pika" Cooking Contest. Visitors can compete in a Karaoke Singing Contest, a Dragon Boat Race, or the Cha Cha Dance Contest. Children and adults alike will enjoy the Hermit Crab Race. This year's festival will also feature various vendor booths.

Food buffs will be especially interested in the challenging Hot Pepper Eating Contest, as well as the "Estofao Pika" Cooking Contest. This Chamorro delicacy, a local version of Chicken Adobo, is made with fresh native chicken and many spices, with the primary one being the hot donni sali.

"This is one of the NMI's highlights of the year," noted Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "Residents flock to this event—it's a great place for tourists to really experience the Chamorro and Carolinian culture in a beautiful setting."

For more information, contact the MVA Tinian office at 433-9365 or e-mail at vborja@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

MMAC organizing committee meeting tomorrow

The Marianas March Against Cancer 2010 Organizing Committee will be having a committee meeting tomorrow, Jan. 5, at 5:30pm.

The meeting will take place at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinan Room. As the committee begins to prepare for the 2010 MMAC event, the committee would like to extend their sincere appreciation to the teams, community, and sponsors for the continued support for the fight against cancer.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact 2010 chairwoman Janine Nogis at janine.nogis@gmail.com.

For more information about Marianas March Against Cancer and its plans for 2010, contact 483-3874. ***(PR)***

Invitation for Bids IFB10-GOV-034

Security Services for Water Task Force Warehouse

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed Bids for Security Services for the Water Task Force Warehouse on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project Scope of Work will be available at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, on or after **December 21, 2009.**

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for **10:00 a.m.** local time, **January 8, 2010**, at the CNMI Water **Task Force Conference Room, 1316 Anatahan Dr., Capitol Hill, Saipan.**

All questions regarding this IFB must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 pm, January 6, 2010**, to Mr. Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, facsimile number (670) 664-2279.

Bids must be sealed and marked **"IFB10-GOV-034"**. For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **3:00 p.m**. local time, **January 20, 2010**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bid by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, **January 20, 2010,** and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **January 20, 2010,** and must be received no later than **January 29, 2010.** Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly open and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 3:00 pm local time, **January 29, 2010**. However, if no Notices of Intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 3:00 pm local time on **January 21, 2010**.

The bid procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive any imperfections in any bid if to do so will be in the best interest of the CNMI. All Bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

BENIGNO R. FITIAL
Governor

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 4 1999

NMI hurdles Y2K test
The Northern Marianas has passed the Y2K test as the so-called millennium bug failed to wreak havoc on the island's computer systems in both the government and the private sector during the rollover into the new year, according to officials. A brief power outage that occurred on wide areas on Saipan barely four hours into 2000 was not related to any computer glitch, but overheated generators of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation. A mother residing in Finasisu, who requested anonymity, said the outage had struck fears among her family who immediately linked arms thinking it was the "rapture"—the biblical scenario predicting the end of the world.

Fitial forms coalition
Former Speaker Benigno R. Fitial has organized a new coalition of Republicans, Democrats and Independents to take the leadership mantle when the 12th House of Representatives convenes next week. The move was part of his quest to secure the speakership when the 18-seat members take their oath on Jan. 10. Both Mr. Fitial and incumbent Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider have been eyeing the top post. In a statement, Mr. Fitial said he has been working with colleagues he feels are "willing to make a difference in setting the tone for the new millennium by resolving the economic crisis that has seen a significant drop in revenue generation" over the last three years.

Jan. 4 2000

Tobacco settlement funds missing?
Where has the money gone? Lawmakers are now wondering what ever happened to the over $800,000 received by the CNMI government so far as its share from the multi-billion dollar tobacco settlement. House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Antonio M. Camacho has called Finance Sec. Lucy DLG. Nielsen to shed light on the matter following an inquiry from the Health and Welfare Committee chair Rep. Malua T. Peter. Ms. Peter has expressed concern that while the money has yet been appropriated by the Legislature, the government has already spent the funds handed over to the Commonwealth since 1999.

Funds scarce for housing projects
Some 45 families may never achieve their dream of owning a home as the Koblerville housing project remains in limbo following difficulties in getting funds to complete much-needed infrastructure improvement. The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation is appealing to the Senate to approve appropriation of $2.4 million to install sewer, power and water as well as road infrastructure within the housing project—funding that has been pending for months. NMHC Executive Director Marylou S. Ada pleaded yesterday to senators to immediately act on the measure that was passed last week by the lower house. This is the same bill approved earlier last year by House members, but was amended by the Senate to set aside $800,000 for various projects on Rota and Tinian. But Ms. Ada said $1.6 million was not enough to finish the project, and the $2.4 million was the amount quoted by contractors to install the infrastructure.

Jan. 04, 2002

Fund investments up $18.7-M
Despite the US recession, overseas investments of the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund jumped-unexpectedly-by about 5.9 percent in November 2001, giving the Fund's overseas portfolio $18.7 million in earnings. The Fund's investments in Asia also posted a healthy $1.35-million growth from October 31 to November 30 last year, pushing the portfolio's value from $7.72 million to $9.07 million. With these results-a continuing upswing in the growth trend since the September 11 attacks-the Fund hopes that its overseas investments will recover and reach pre-911 levels by the time summer rolls by this year, said Fund legal counsel Kathleen S. Troy-Rucker.

DPW to remove waste from shore
The Department of Public Works has already pinpointed a particular site where a stockpile of hazardous waste—automotive batteries, transformers possibly containing polychlorinated biphenyls and 55-gallon drums allegedly containing waste oil—may be relocated far enough from the shoreline in Tanapag, where it has been dumped for several months. The site is located at DPW's technical services parking lot in Lower Base, according to Solid Waste Program Manager Alberta Carpenter.

Millie Carroll appointed pastor of IUMC

Immanuel United Methodist Church in Chalan Konoa will have a new pastor on Jan. 17 following the return of Millie Carroll.

Carroll will serve as lay pastor of IUMC, founded by Rev. Barbara Grace Ripple in 1994. Her appointment is by United Methodist Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, California-Pacific Annual Conference.

"I'm humbled but feel very excited, happy and honored to again be with the wonderful people of IUMC. It's a great privilege to serve IUMC, a church which welcomes everyone: of all ages, of all marriage status, of all partner selection," said Carroll.

In 2003-05 her main focus at IUMC was developing Sunday School and activities for children; developing religious dance for adults and children; and counseling.

"Worship, Sunday School, and all activities need to feel alive with participation opportunities for all ages. Services will often include puppets and dance," she said.

Carroll feels the facility and location in Chalan Kanoa is excellent. "And the small congregation will give present and new members the opportunity to 'Mold the Church We've Always Hoped For' as we grow spiritually and physically. Very seldom do members and pastors have such an opportunity."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pastor Millie Carroll with IUMC 2005 Christmas Service dancers, from left, Mary Deala, Serafina Rogoyawa, Joyce Tengco, Emily Frink, Grace Dowez, and Phalai Frink. Religious dance will again be important in worship services.

"We want strong focus on caring for each other and serious issues facing our members, but want to be helpful on problems affecting all of Saipan and the wider world. IUMC has tried to follow United Methodism's strong combination of worship, evangelism and social service," she said.

Saipan social outreach has primarily been providing baby layettes for CHC newborns, assistance on contract employees' issues and shelter for emotionally/physically abused women. Internationally, most of IUMC's financial and spiritual help has been for children—for education in poor mountainous area of China, typhoon victims in the Philippines, earthquake victims in Indonesia, problems in Malawi, and war orphans in Iraq.

Carroll hopes her social work experience while a UMC missionary in Hong Kong, hunger/homeless work in New York City, and peace work in both places will be useful in IUMC's outreach.

"Especially my 25 years in Hong Kong taught me even small groups of people can accomplish huge changes. One was finally (through a 10-year campaign) convincing the government to change from providing education to less than half 1st-9th graders to providing free education for all. Providing shelters for emotionally/physically abused women, providing more adequate housing and social welfare benefits, and increased voting privileges were among other key accomplishments of the groups I had the privilege to work in. Really, when other have problems, aren't those problems ours as well?"

Carroll is looking forward to again working closely with The Korean Immanuel UMC in Koblerville.

"Pastor Myung Taek Lee and the congregation warmly hosted our Immanuel UMC for many years until we obtained present space in Chalan Kanoa."

She further added, "There are so many similarities among religions on Saipan. Like Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Baha'i faith are each based on love and caring for others. I hope we'll have close relations with each and also with other Christian denominations. Just think what we could accomplish if all religions and denominations focused on common problems!" she added.

"I firmly believe war is not an answer to solving world problems and hope IUMC will take a stand for peace and simultaneously reach out to military families with their huge burdens while loved ones are in Iraq and Afghanistan. I hope IUMC will stand for peace, justice, and equality for all."

During marriage equality hearings in June 2004 she represented IUMC and was the only church representative who supported the right of marriage for all.

Although multi-national, services are in English. Carroll joins others at IUMC in warmly welcoming all to the multi-aged worship service on Jan. 17 at 9am.

IUMC in Chalan Kanoa is on Chalan Kanoa Street and Barbara Avenue (east of Town Center and Beach Road, near The Catholic Cathedral).

For further information, call 322-6158 after Jan. 15. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Department of the Navy (DoN) and the Joint Guam Program Office (JGPO) will host public hearings on the islands of Guam, Tinian, and Saipan to receive oral and written comments on the Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) military relocation Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS). The Draft EIS/OEIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with relocating Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam, constructing visiting Aircraft Carrier berthing facilities, and establishing a U.S. Army Air and Missile Defense Task Force on Guam. The Draft EIS/OEIS also examines off base mission critical, mission support, and community support infrastructure improvements needed to ensure that Joint Region Marianas can provide expanded direct support of the DoD strategic mission and operational readiness in the Western Pacific Region. The public hearings will be conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

The public is encouraged to attend the public hearings, which will be held at the following dates, times, and locations:

Thursday January 7, 2010- Southern High School, Santa Rita, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Saturday January 9, 2010- Field House, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm
(Open House) 3:00 pm-5:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Monday January 11, 2010- Yigo Gymnasium, Yigo, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm-9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Tuesday January 12, 2010- Okkodo High School, Dededo, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Thursday January 14, 2010- Tinian Elementary School, San Jose, Tinian 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Friday January 15, 2010- Multi Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

An open house will take place during the first two hours of each hearing, followed by a two-hour formal public hearing. Informational posters will be displayed and subject matter experts will be available during the open house to discuss the findings of the Draft EIS/OEIS and to answer questions from the public. The formal portion of the hearing will include a presentation followed by a request for comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS. Chamorro translators will be available at all hearings, and Carolinian translators will be available at the Tinian and Saipan hearings.

Oral and/or written comments may be submitted at the public hearings. Oral comments will be limited to three minutes. After three minutes, speakers will be allowed to continue off-stage with a typist. Interested agencies, individuals, and groups unable to attend the public hearings are encouraged to provide written comments postmarked no later than February 17, 2010.

Mail comments to: JGPO c/o NAVFAC Pacific
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii 96860-3134
Attention: GPMO

A web-based comment form can also be submitted at www.guambuildupeis.us.

The Draft EIS/OEIS is available for review at www.guambuildupeis.us and at the following libraries: University of Guam Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Government Documents Tan Siu Lin Building, UOG Station, Mangilao, GU 96923; Nieves M. Flores Memorial Library, 254 Martyr Street, Hagåtña, GU 96910; Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, P.O. Box 501092, Saipan, MP 96950; Northern Marianas College Olympio T. Borja Memorial Library, P.O. Box 501250, Saipan, MP 96950; and the Tinian Public Library, P.O. Box 520704, Tinian, MP 96952. In addition, a reading room with copies of the Draft EIS/OEIS for the public to review has been established at Agana Shopping Center. This facility will be open during normal shopping center hours starting from November 21, 2009 to February 17, 2010 so that members of the public can access and review the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Federal agencies, government of Guam agencies, government of CNMI agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to provide oral and/or written comments for consideration in the Final EIS/OEIS. JGPO will consider all comments received as they develop the Final EIS/OEIS.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

America the safer

As you have no doubt heard, the first 10 years of the 21st century were dreadful — a lost decade of terrorism, war and economic stagnation. There is some truth to that portrayal. But in one significant respect, the awful Aughties were practically a golden age. We refer to the continued progress the United States is making against homicide and other violent crime.

According to some conventional wisdom, economic trouble breeds lawlessness. Yet in the first half of 2009, as unemployment skyrocketed, reported murders, forcible rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults decreased by 4.4 percent compared with the first half of 2008, according to the FBI. The decline in homicide was especially striking: down 29.8 percent in Los Angeles, 14 percent in Atlanta, 10 percent in Boston. With 461 murders through Dec. 27, New York was on track for the lowest number since comprehensive record-keeping began in 1963 — when the Big Apple was a slightly smaller town.

In the Washington area, Virginia's homicide rate hit 4.7 per 100,000 in 2008, down from 5.7 at the beginning of the decade; Maryland's 2008 murder rate was higher, 8.8 per 100,000, but still lower than it had been in 2002. At 31.4 per 100,000, Washington's 2008 murder rate was shamefully high but lower than it was at the beginning of the decade. And the 2009 body count, 140, was a 45-year-low and down 25 percent from 2008.

The national decrease in murder began about two decades ago. In 1991, the national homicide rate hit 9.8 per 100,000 inhabitants, prompting forecasts of permanently rising street violence — then fell to 5.7 in 1999. Many wondered whether this "Great Crime Decline" could be sustained for another 10 years. The answer would appear to be yes: By 2008, the murder rate had drifted down to 5.4 per 100,000, the lowest level since 1965. And given the preliminary figures, the rate for 2009 should be lower still. Indeed, if present trends continue, America will experience a degree of public safety not known since the 1950s.

Obviously, one murder is one murder too many. U.S. rates of violent crime remain above those of other industrial democracies. And certain places, including Baltimore, where murder rose 9.5 percent in the first half of 2009, have progressed less dramatically than others. Still, this substantial and sustained reduction in murder, once thought impossible, ranks as a major national achievement.

If only we knew exactly why and how it has occurred. An accident of demography? The passing of the crack cocaine epidemic? We're inclined to credit policies that put more brave and dedicated cops on the street, with better technology and smarter tactics. Still New York City continued to rack up lower homicide rates in the past decade even as its police force shrank by 6,000. New York officials say that city's tougher gun laws have helped; yet Houston also recorded a drop in homicide in the first half of 2009 despite loose gun laws.

Tougher sentencing probably took some career criminals off the streets — though there's little evidence that the death penalty deters murder. No doubt new lifesaving medical techniques turned potential homicides into lesser offenses — yet aggravated assault is down, too.

Government at all levels spends much time and money figuring out what's going wrong in our society and how to fix it. Perhaps we need a bigger effort to determine what's been going right in the fight against violent crime — and to spread that knowledge to every jurisdiction in the country.

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Americans can work on reforming health—their own

By STEVE CASE
Special to The Washington Post

The writer, co-founder of America Online and chairman of the Case Foundation, is chairman and chief executive of Revolution, an umbrella corporation that supports companies with innovative business models.

With passage of health-care reform legislation imminent, this is a significant moment. Many have fought for decades to bring about meaningful change on this issue. Whether or not you agree with the legislation, there is no denying that mountains have been moved. But let's also be honest in acknowledging that while these changes are a start, the real work to reform health care is just beginning.

The battle over the past year wasn't about health-care reform; it was primarily about insurance reform—how we pay for care.

They say in medicine that the real challenge is to get the diagnosis right. If there's too much focus on the cure before it's clear what the problem is, the "solution" won't stick. And that is exactly what happened with the health-care debate we just witnessed.

As a nation we bypassed the diagnosis stage and quickly focused on addressing problems related to the insurance system. But those are secondary, not primary, issues. A core issue is that our nation has too many people with too many diseases that are debilitating and costly. We have focused our attention on triage—solving the immediate problems when people get sick—rather than on getting people healthy, to reduce future problems.

The truth is, our country doesn't really have a health-care system. We have a sick-care system. Our system isn't primarily designed to keep us healthy; it's organized to get us well when we get sick.

Take a hard look at our real underlying disease: the lifestyle choices we make every day that lead to more sickness and thus more cost. This vicious circle is poised to continue unless we craft a system that encourages and rewards health, rather than accepting a system that finds it easier to deal with us after we have become sick.

Now, this nation does a pretty good (albeit, costly) job of getting people well when they get sick. But we're missing the larger question: What can we do to keep people from getting sick in the first place? The area that requires the greatest focus relates to chronic diseases.

The number of people with diabetes is nearly 24 million. The National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that obesity rates will top 40 percent by 2020, and annual related medical costs have already reached $147 billion. By some estimates, chronic diseases account for more than 70 percent of the $2 trillion spent on medical care in the United States each year.

Chronic diseases result from a number of factors, including heredity. But for most people they are largely caused by unhealthy behaviors such as poor nutrition, lack of exercise, smoking and other largely preventable lifestyle choices. Amid the debate about health-care reform, why is there so little discussion of the role each of us can play to improve our health and reduce our nation's financial burden?

Americans can't let the health-care debate happen only around conference tables in Washington. We need to have discussions with our families around our kitchen tables. We are part of the problem and should be part of the solution. Helping pay the costs of healing sick people may be an important role for government, but doing what we can to avoid getting sick must be a commitment each of us makes to ourselves, our families and our communities.

This is not about who pays for what. It's not even really about disease. It's about the decisions each of us make every day. We can collectively benefit our nation by making smarter choices that don't burden others with the costs of our sick care.

For most of us, the jargon of the debate over health care isn't what's important. While we let our elected officials figure out how to pay for the increased access to care, why doesn't each of us focus on staying out of the system as much as we can? That means making a few simple changes that, if embraced, can improve our health and save our country a lot of money. Good starts would be: Eat less food and make smarter choices about what to consume. Move your body more. Don't smoke. These are all simple lifestyle choices that over time can add up to significant change and create a positive long-term impact on your health and our nation's health-care system.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Año Nuevo, Año Bueno on Tinian

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

Sights and sounds of New Years' past accompanied my brief sojourn at the Dynasty Hotel on Tinian over the year's turn. Regaled at the hotel/casino lobby's vociferous *Adios 2009* celebration*,* the totally employee-supported and community-based performances were graced by the establishment's General Manager Tom Liu and wife Nana, and emceed by cosmopolitans *Maori kiwi* Kiri Jackson of marketing and *Cebu1a inday* Aida Jumao-as of the front desk.

My host who pretends to practice his profession while his employ pretends he is not being paid, has a highly developed addiction to inhaling the Dynasty air (yes, he inhales; after all, that is the point, isn't it?) without laying a finger on the electronic bandits nor tapping with them on the felt-covered tables. I have become a regular client to his benevolence this day of the year in this hotel's mandarin opulence.

We now seem to make this get-together an annual therapeutic ritual while we down a couple of drinks, share bitter-sweet real and imagined wild stories, and tell tall tales of remembered shortcomings of others, and lucidly misplaced rosy annual expectations from ourselves. It does save us a few shekels from the cost of the 50-minute couch, now easily equivalent to a couple of sensational flesh kneading by licensed or unlicensed (costs more) masseuse over at Garapan's Paseo de Marianas!

Impressive previous visits to the Dynasty included a front room view of a 30-minute firework spectacular to the 50-x revved-up Bose-speaker sounding accompaniment of Rossini's William Tell Overture and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, a guaranteed competitor to any ephedrine-induced or sildenifil-assisted approdisiacal bouts. Ah, but those were better times when lodging at the marbled tiles of the Dynasty cost us less than half of a Ben Franklin note a night, and still get a free ride on the ferry when returning to Saipan! One time, the island government even laid out a sumptuous feast out in the parking lot and managing director Alfred Yu was one mighty happy camper.

The economic downturn has not dampened GM Liu's perspicacity. Though the recent planeload of Guangzhou weeklong captive audience could only have been dark ink into the company's ledger, this year's *Auld Lang Syne* song-and-dance performances lined up local non-professional talents of the likes of Pinay Mylene Reyes' powerful belting out of the song, *Power of Love,* and Anax Intia jiggling everyone's giggle with 'her' sex-goddess rendition of Broadway's hip-shaking "Hey, there Stranger!"

Bringing down the house, and eliciting dance floor participation was the inspired rendition of the Pride of Korea among the Casino dealers, of the Wonder Girl's cutesy blockbuster, *Nobody.* Of the five, two were definitely *ajummas* (girls who look old enough to be married). The silver hair bewigged other three dancers had hair follicles the likes of the lush Rota savannah after the rain but that was the only indication of their bona fide gender. In moves and gracefulness, they were definitely wonder girls for the evening!

Leo Pascua of security did an instrumental solo and Casino GM Ken Barberis plucked his acoustic guitar. Kiri and Aida led the children and adult games (G-rated). The Palace in Paradise poured its pennies into noise makers, eye-catching flashers, and colorful hats that were rapidly devoured by the audience gathered around the brightly lit Xmas Tree at the lobby who applauded and cheered the Taga and Hafa Adai dancers, particularly the young hula dancers and their *Aloha.*

BoE chair Lucy Maratita-Blanco and husband David were among those who joined in the countdown to the witching hour as libations and munchies were offered from stalls. It was reportedly the only show in town, and although the local Chamolinian residents seemingly preferred to gather with kin, the event had the feel of a family outing of contracted farmers and construction workers, store keepers and clerks, tourists and hotel personnel, and their families, than a Las Vegas extravaganza. And as undaunted GM Tom Liu gleefully reiterated, the efforts were all voluntary.

Casino GM Ken Barberis plucks his acoustic guitar.

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino welcome 2010 with a vociferous *Adios 2009* celebration complete with confetti.

The largely oriental audience culturally subdued in public display of emotions and affections, were mostly extending hand shakes one to another, as opposed to the western minute-long smoocheroes on Times Square and other ethanol-laced places, and the uninhibited hugging of strangers especially when one have had a few jiggers of Scotland's single malt. This time, especially with the Japanese tourists, we did the Obama bow and skipped the warm flesh-on-flesh Iberian abrazo!

Jeff Castro's sumptuous moveable feast at brunch down the Broadway Restaurant topped the visit at this Palace in Paradise before heading to the underutilized international airport dominated by local triathlete Joshua A. Manglona's confident and determined image, and the splendid NGP promise of a casino/resort that may just shift the image of this island as the twilight of the nuclear dawn ("little boy", Enola Gay, and Hiroshima) to the sunrise of frolic and play in the tropical Pacific West.

A very personal note: We return to this page after considering tutoring University students in icy Harbin this winter and driving a taxi in Kuwait in the Spring. There was a possible religion lecture series in Southeast Asia aboard a 20-day cruise but I was edged out by a Vancouver PhD. So it looks like I will be island-bound awhile.

Saipan maven Ruth Tighe was medically alerted last year that she may not hear a toot at the turn to Two-Oh-Ten. Well, she did, and we lift up her health and endurance as we continue to honor her in this page. Her vitality reminds me of what George Bernard Shaw was reported to have said: *I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no "brief candle" to me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.* Not to sound disrespectful but after the wonder girls of Tinian's Dynasty, and this being Bowl season, it is not inappropriate to shout loudly to Ruth, "Go Girl!"

Letter to the Editor

Reexamine military base on Tinian

I've been reading, online, in several news articles concerning the issues with the U.S.-Japan bilateral agreement to relocate the U. S. Marine Corps Futenma Air Base Station in Okinawa, Japan.

While the U.S.-Japan bilateral agreement to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps Futenma Air Base Station in Okinawa, Japan within the Okinawa Prefecture remains unsettled with Japan's new leadership, I could not help but wonder whether the island of Tinian in the Northern Marianas has ever been taken into a more thorough and fullest consideration to move the base here by the military planners. It seems logical and a sensible decision to establish a solid U.S. military base on U.S. soil rather than using the 2/3 of the military leased land for practice firing range and urban warfare training grounds. The investments made for the base build-up, both from the U.S. and Japan, are monies well spent and will further lessen the burdens imposed on the Japanese people in the Okinawa Prefecture.

The Northern Mariana Islands is still substantially vital for defense purposes. It is strategically located and within about three hours of flight time to arrive at any hotspots to the west and northwest of this Asia-Pacific region. It makes sense to station most of the pre-positioning ships off the coast of Okinawa thereby allowing less time to deploy military equipments and less interference with the islands' residents.

I could still recall the late Senator Joe R. Cruz, who was actively pushing for a military base build-up on Tinian. Why the senator had even relocated to the island thinking that sooner a military base could become a thing of reality, but Joe had passed away and never saw his dream materialized.

The residents of Tinian would probably still welcome and look forward to Joe's plan for the base build-up, and I suggest that it should be examined further.

Enrique Dela Cruz
Capital Hill

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°

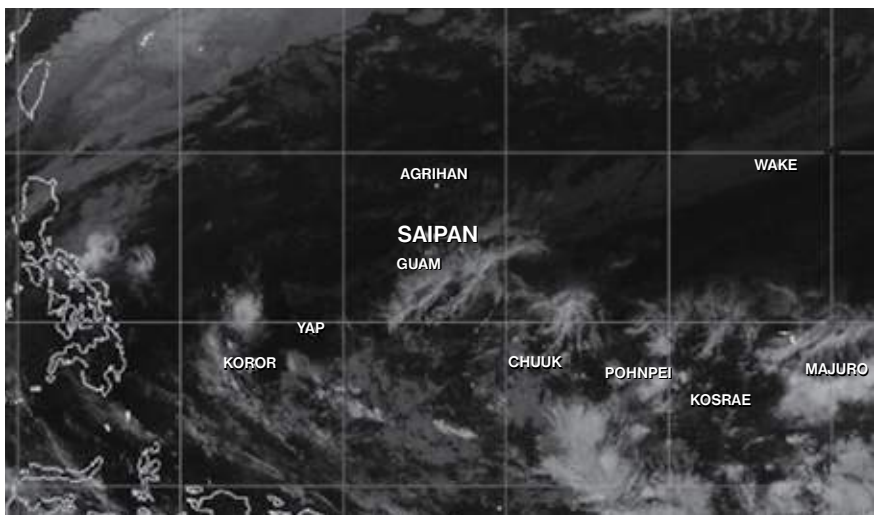
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲83	▼75
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼78
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼79
Majuro	Rain	▲85	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲68	▼57
Beijing	Sunny	▲17	▼ 5
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼64
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼69
London	Partly Sunny	▲34	▼28
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲74	▼48
Manila	Rain	▲86	▼74
Melbourne	Sunny	▲81	▼64
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲67	▼43
New York	Cloudy	▲35	▼26
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼32
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲27	▼18
Pusan	Rain/Snow	▲45	▼16
Rome	Rain	▲52	▼51
Salem	Rain	▲50	▼39
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲61	▼45
Seoul	Snow	▲28	▼10
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼37
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲34	▼24

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

An old cold front enters the northeast corner of the discussion area at 22N180 and extends southwestward to northeast of Wake Island at 21N172E then continues as a shear line across Guam at 13N145E to end north of Yap at 11N137E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found over Wake Island and the southern Marianas along and up to 250 miles northwest of this boundary. A surface trough reaches northward from 5N135E to 11N133E. Scattered showers are seen near the trough axis over Koror within 105 miles of a line from 12N135E to 8N132E to 4N134E. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from Halmahera through 1N130E to a low-level circulation centered south of Pohnpei at 2N158E and turns northeastward to end north of Kosrae at 6N163E. Convergent winds near the trough are producing scattered showers south of Yap and Guam within 50 miles of a line from 7N137E to 5N140E to 3N149E. Similar conditions are also evident over Chuuk and Pohnpei but south of Kosrae or south of a line from 8N148E to 7N161E to 4N162E to 3N166E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms associated with a trade-wind disturbance are occurring over Majuro, Tarawa and Butaritari atolls but south of Kwajalein or south of a line from 7N166E to 10N176E to 10N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:06 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet
11:00 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
4:52 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
9:47 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Tuesday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Wednesday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:38 PM	9:28 AM
Tuesday	10:35 PM	10:12 AM
Wednesday	11:31 PM	10:54 AM
Thursday		11:35 AM
Friday	12:26 AM	12:17 PM

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Pacific

PNG small plane crash claims six lives

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier)—In Papua New Guinea, A LIGHT aircraft crashed into the mountains of Boana, Morobe Province yesterday killing six people who were on board.

The expatriate pilot is fighting for his life in a hospital in Cairns after he was airlifted from the crash site to Lae by a rescue team and later flown to Australia.

The plane crashed into the side of the Bengun hill, located between Gumbum and Tunam villages, about three hours from Boana, the district Headquarters of the Nawaeb electorate.

The pilot's mayday signal was intercepted by a helicopter which followed the signal to the crash site and rescued the pilot and rushed him to Lae for medical evacuation.

Police and medical officers who flew to the crash site retrieved all the bodies including two children and were taken to the Angau Memorial Hospital morgue.

Provincial Police Commander Superintendent Peter Guinness who went with the team to the crash site said the plane was severely burnt and they could not do much but wait for the Civil Aviation Authority to carry out investigation.

The plane, owned by Kiunga Aviation, based in Lae was on its way to Baindoang in the hinterlands of Nawaeb from Nadzab airport early yesterday morning when the pilot encountered a technical problem and decided to return to Nadzab when it crashed.

Only the tail section was intact at the crash site while the front and rest of the plane was burnt out. The pilot, who suffered burns, was considered a miracle as the front of the plane was also burnt out.

According to Ward 17 councillor of the Erap Wain Local Level Government, David Gaman, they heard the plane flying over very early in the morning towards Baindoang and Kasanombe areas.

But not very long it returned and they could hear loud noises coming from the plane and then the engine went off and it glided to a hill covered with grass near their village.

"It came down and crashed and we saw smoke coming from the plane and we rushed to see the plane," he said at the crash site.

Locals Martha Bob and Morbie Jonah, with the help of others were able to rescue the pilot who was near the crashed plane calling out for help.

They went and took the pilot to a helicopter which had landed near the crash site and took him to Lae.

The pilot was later medivac to Cairns in Australia for further medical treatment in the evening.

This is the second worst plane crash to occur in Papua New Guinea this year. In August, a Twin Otter aircraft owned by Airlines PNG crashed into the mountains of Kokoda, killing 13 people on board including the pilot.

Of those killed, nine were Australians and four were Papua New Guineans.

Investigation into this crash is still continuing.

New Cook Islands airline set for 2010 flights

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands (Cook Islands News)—Kia Orana Air, the low-cost domestic airline first proposed in mid-2008, is now due to take off by May next year.

Managing director Mark Lusby says the economic downturn was one contributing factor in the postponement of the launch of the airline which had been planned from late 2008 onwards.

The company has now reapplied for an air service licence to operate a 19-seat Beechcraft 1900D aircraft between Rarotonga and the outer islands.

Lusby says the aircraft which can carry 750 kilogrammes of baggage and cargo has been sourced from the United States. The aircraft is used by numerous airlines around the world including Air New Zealand and is noted for its flight speed, ability to fly at high altitudes, and its ability to operate well on short runways.

"There will be about two to three flights a day. We have a full schedule that will introduce a competitive service," says Lusby.

The airline will go into direct competition with Air Rarotonga which in 2007 dramatically increased its airfares to the Northern group islands causing complaints from the public and concern from government over the high fares from the country's only domestic airline.

The Manihiki community was left gobsmacked when the one way fare to their island jumped 69 percent overnight – from $682 to $1150 that year.

Kia Orana Air's attractive airfare prices have now been included in its licence application to the ministry of transport.

There will be a $260 return fare to any Southern group island and a $1600 return fare to the Northern islands. Cargo prices will also be competitive with those of Air Rarotonga.

"The outer islands are hurting over freight so we aim to make it more competitive to enable people to send goods to the islands, and for outer islanders to send their products such as veges, fruit and handcrafts back to Rarotonga at a good rate."

A recruitment drive by the company resulted in so much interest that Lusby says they will have no trouble hiring staff. Lusby, a pilot himself for almost 20 years, will fly for the airline along with six other pilots. He says the company has a policy to hire locals first.

More good news came this year when Lusby secured a business partner for the airline – an Australian aviation and consulting specialist company with resources available to add to the venture's credibility.

Earlier this year there were setbacks in securing office, hangar and check-in counter space at Rarotonga airport – but Lusby says facilities for Kia Orana Air are now almost signed off on.

Last year former aviation minister Tangata Vavia praised the proposed airline as a step in the right direction to make domestic airfares more com- petitive.

Lusby who has a young family with his wife and business partner Tekura, has previously said he aims to provide Cook Islanders and visitors alike with an efficient, safe and affordable flying choice through Kia Orana Air.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

A. Samoa pays out $13 million in tax rebates

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (The Samoa News)—American Samoa has paid out a little over US$13 million in rebate checks to local tax payers who qualified to receive such payment under last year's federal economic stimulus law. All unused money will be returned to the U.S. government, according to federal law. Based on provisions of the economic stimulus package, the U.S. Treasury Department sent to American Samoa a lump sum payment of US$20.4 million. As of the end of September this year, American Samoa Government paid out US$13.2 million in rebate checks and there is about US$7.2 million left "and most of it will be returned sometime next year to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as required," said Tax Office Manager Melvin Joseph. He said Oct. 15, 2009 was the deadline to file for the tax rebate but an extension was given to those individuals serving in combat zones. That extension expires mid year, 2010.

Fiji puts off repairs to Tavenui airstrip

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times)—There are no plans by Airports Fiji Limited (AFL) to upgrade the airport on Taveuni, Fiji because of vast work and funding involved, says AFL. AFL spokesman Pio Rokosuka said although they have not received any request from the Taveuni Hotel Association to upgrade the Matei airport to cater for ATR42 flights, the work was quite impossible at this stage. "The feasibility study of extending the runway to cater for Avions de Transport Régional (ATR) operations needs to be carried out and the project will need to be Government funded," Mr. Rokosuka said. "This will be an expensive exercise requiring a longer and wider sealed runway which will roughly cost between FJ$8 million [US$4.1 million] and FJ$2 million [US$1 million]."

Fiji villagers warned against turtle harvest

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times, Dec. 31)—In Fiji, villagers have been warned against catching turtles this festive season following reports of the illegal harvesting of turtles in some coastal villages of Macuata. North Fisheries Officer Aminio Raimuria said that unless there was an exemption authorized by the minister, no turtle could be harvested. "This is the festive season and there will be feasting going on and as turtle meat is a traditional food for coastal villages, we fear illegal harvesting could happen," he said. "The four months from November through to January are breeding season for turtles and the purpose of the moratorium on the harvest of turtles is to improve their numbers."

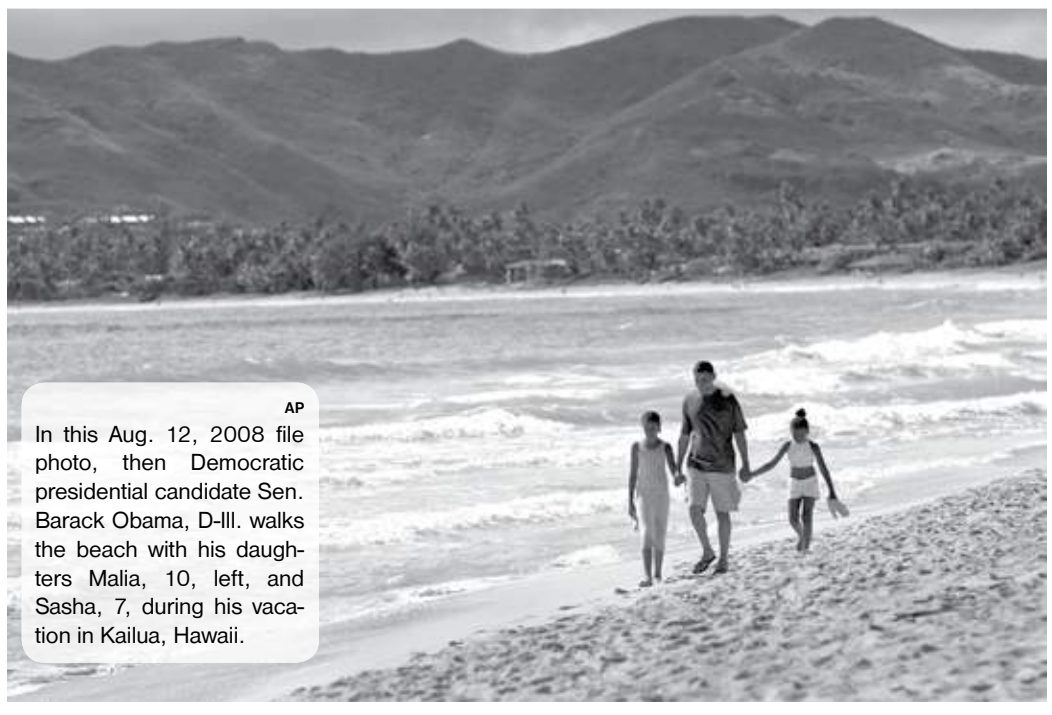
Obama sees sea life at Hawaii park, goes to beach

WAIMANALO, Hawaii (AP)—President Barack Obama, family and friends visited sea animals and the beach during their weekend Hawaii vacation activities.

Obama, his daughters and his half-sister spent about an hour Saturday at Sea Life Park, a marine center east of Honolulu in Waimanalo. Sea Life Park has animals including dolphins, sea lions, penguins, stingrays and sea turtles.

The first family and friends later drove to the beach at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe.

The Obama family and friends had Sea Life Park mostly to themselves during their visit because it hadn't opened yet.



AP

In this Aug. 12, 2008 file photo, then Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. walks the beach with his daughters Malia, 10, left, and Sasha, 7, during his vacation in Kailua, Hawaii.

When their motorcade returned to the vacation home in Kailua, they were greeted by a group of protesters calling themselves "disaffected Democrats." They waved signs saying "we love you" and "support the public option."

Fiji reinstates war dance in pre-match ritual

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Fiji will perform the cibi, or war dance, before all future rugby internationals after briefly discarding the pre-match ritual on religious grounds.

The Fiji Rugby Union said Wednesday it would reinstate the 70-year-old tradition which was dropped during the team's northern hemisphere tour in November at the urging of coach Sam Domoni.

Domoni, who is Christian, encouraged players to discard the war dance which he described as a relic of Fiji's pagan past. He said players agreed with his decision because they "fear God."

The decision polarized Fijians who are deeply religious but also rugby-mad.

Fiji Rugby Union chairman Viliame Gavoka said the cibi was an important part of Fiji's rugby tradition and should not be lost.

"Leaders in rugby the world over, led by the IRB, welcome the growth of the sport, but are careful that the integrity of rugby in its fullness is protected wherever it is played," Gavoka said.

"For Fiji, certain traditions unique to the country, in keeping with the richness of rugby, have also developed and are integral to the sport.

"The FRU is committed to protecting the integrity of rugby in terms of its culture and traditions, and shall make as policy that the cibi be as protocol performed in any international match."

Business

Cable TV standoffs threaten viewing costs, choices

CHICAGO (AP)—Many questions remain for cable TV viewers nationwide even after Fox and Time Warner Cable settled their noisy spat with a New Year's Day agreement.

The deal was good news for more than 6 million Time Warner customers in the short term: College bowl and National Football League games, "American Idol" and a host of other popular Fox programs in New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Orlando, Fla., and other markets are appearing on their screens as usual.

Sharri Genens of Redondo Beach, Calif., was among the Time Warner customers who were relieved. She said she was extremely upset when she heard she might lose Fox.

"I would have dropped cable entirely if they'd done that," said Genens, 39. "I would have just gone to somebody else to pay more, done whatever I needed to do to get my shows"—including football.

Fox had threatened to force Time Warner Cable and Bright House to drop its signal from 14 of its TV stations and a half-dozen of its cable channels if Time Warner didn't increase payments to Fox in a contract that took effect Friday. The deal affects close to half its customers. Time Warner is the nation's second-largest cable provider after Comcast Corp.

But the companies are not talking about how the agreement will affect customers' bills. And the mood among cable providers, broadcasters and other content producers has not improved.

A less amicable ending in a separate programming dispute showed the downside of playing hardball.

Cablevision Systems Corp. customers in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut reacted angrily in more than 100 posts Friday and Saturday on the media and entertainment news site Deadline.com after about 3.1 million subscribers lost access Friday to HGTV and Food Network Friday.

Comments accused Cablevision and Scripps Networks Interactive Inc. - but mostly Cablevision - of greed and arrogance when they failed to reach agreement over a fee increase Scripps demanded.

Many of those who posted said they were switching to competitors or satellite or going online. Some were particularly upset at the prospect of missing a two-hour Iron Chef episode set for 8 p.m. EST Sunday that features Michelle Obama and the White House chef.

AP

This Monday, Feb. 2, 2009 picture shows the Time Warner Center, background left, in New York.

Bad year for biofuel ends on a dour note

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—An alternative fuel for diesel engines is off to a shaky start this year though it emits fewer pollutants and cuts down on petroleum use because it's made from environmentally friendly waste and vegetable oil.

A federal tax credit that provided makers of biodiesel $1 for every gallon expired Friday. As a result, some U.S. producers say they will shut down without the government subsidy.

Biodiesel's woes come on top of a year of problems for the fledgling biofuel industry—an irony given the push to cut down on greenhouse gases and ease the nation's need for foreign oil. A key driver for the alternative fuel—the high cost of oil—disappeared as diesel prices dropped 18 percent since the beginning of the recession. Then in March the European Union placed import-killing tariffs on biodiesel and other biofuels.

It was a huge hit for U.S. biofuel makers, with Europe taking 95 percent of all global exports.

Biodiesel, which is usually blended with traditional fuel, had over the past few years been the fastest growing fuel among fleet vehicles like buses, snow plows and garbage trucks.

Those fleets, however, can shift to traditional fuel, as some have, when the prices of diesel drops.

The biodiesel industry is now operating at only 15 percent of its potential capacity, according to the National Biodiesel Board, largely because the price of traditional diesel has collapsed. There are close to 180 biodiesel plants operating in about 40 states.

The country's largest biodiesel refinery, in Houston, sits idle. Another major refinery in Hoquiam, Wash., that was restarted recently to meet alternative fuel mandates in Oregon and British Columbia was shut down after an explosion in December.

The loss of the tax credit, which helps pay salaries, buy new equipment and in good times to turn a profit, will hit small producers particularly hard.

Poster child for recession shows signs of recovery

ELKHART, Ind. (AP)—When Ed Neufeldt introduced Barack Obama at a speech in Elkhart County in February, the new president promised the laid off RV worker would find a job.

Since then, Neufeldt has found two, setting up bread displays in grocery stores and working with a company that hopes to hire hundreds of people to make electric motors.

"If I was on unemployment, I'd be bringing home more money than I bring home from both jobs," said Neufeldt, 63, of Wakarusa. "But that's OK, I want to work and I feel like I'm helping the economy a little not being on the unemployment ranks."

Obama has visited the northern Indiana county four times—twice during the 2008 campaign and twice since—focusing attention on the area as emblematic of the nation's double-digit unemployment woes.

AP

In this photo taken Nov. 18, 2009, recreational vehicles are ready sales at International RV World in Elkhart, Ind.

Now, hope is rising in the struggling area as people head back to work—though not always at the same jobs they left, and sometimes for less money.

The unemployment rate here, driven by job cuts at factories that made Elkhart County the capital of recreational vehicle manufacturing, spiked in March to 18.9 percent. But it has fallen steadily since, reaching 14.5 percent in November while the national rate climbed to 10 percent.

Part of the drop in unemployment may be due to hiring at a handful of RV makers like Heartland RV in Elkhart, which recently held a job fair after announcing it would add 400 jobs by March. For jobless workers who have spent months scrimping to keep up with mortgages, the job fair was a welcome first step in returning to the life they used to know.

"Unemployment is livable, but it's not like how we were living," said Marcia Blanton, who lost her job at RV maker Monaco Coach in September 2008. Blanton, 53, of Elkhart, briefly landed a job at a musical instrument factory before being laid off again a year later. She was still waiting to hear from Heartland about her application weeks later.

Other RV makers also have begun hiring, albeit slowly, as orders from dealers have picked up in the past few months. Dealers don't generally discuss sales figures, but two economists who follow the industry have predicted a slight rebound in production for 2010.

Cities, counties take back corporate tax breaks

CHICAGO (AP)—Cash-strapped communities have a message for corporations that promised jobs in return for tax breaks: A deal's a deal.

As the economy sputters along, municipalities struggling to fix roads, fund schools and pay bills increasingly are rescinding tax abatements to companies that don't hire enough workers, that lay them off or that close up shop. At the same time, they're sharpening new incentive deals, leaving no doubt what is expected of companies and what will happen if they don't deliver.

"We will roll out the red carpet as much as we can (but) they are going to honor the contract," said Brendon Gallagher, an alderman in DeKalb, Ill., where Target Corp. got abatements from the city, county, school district and other taxing bodies after promising at least 500 jobs at a local distribution center.

So when the company came up 66 workers short in 2009, Target got word its next tax bill would be jumping almost $600,000—more than half of which goes to the local school district, where teachers and programs have been cut as coffers dried up.

The newfound boldness comes from communities and states that have long bent over backward to lure companies and jobs by offering abatements and other incentives—to the tune of an estimated $60 billion a year in the United States, according to the Washington-based economic development watchdog group Good Jobs First.

The willingness to write—and enforce—the "clawback" provisions comes even as companies across the country struggle and against a broader backdrop of governments getting tough on business practices.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FAA watching American Airlines after 3 mishaps

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)—The Federal Aviation Administration is increasing oversight of American Airlines after three mishaps during landings last month. Jetliners' wingtips touched the ground during two landings, one in Charlotte, N.C., on Dec. 13, the other in Austin, Texas, on Dec. 24. And in Jamaica, a plane overshot the runway during heavy rain on Dec. 22. FAA officials said in a statement Friday they will conduct a review of the mishaps to see if there might be a larger issue.

No federal charges in Nebraska missing cars case

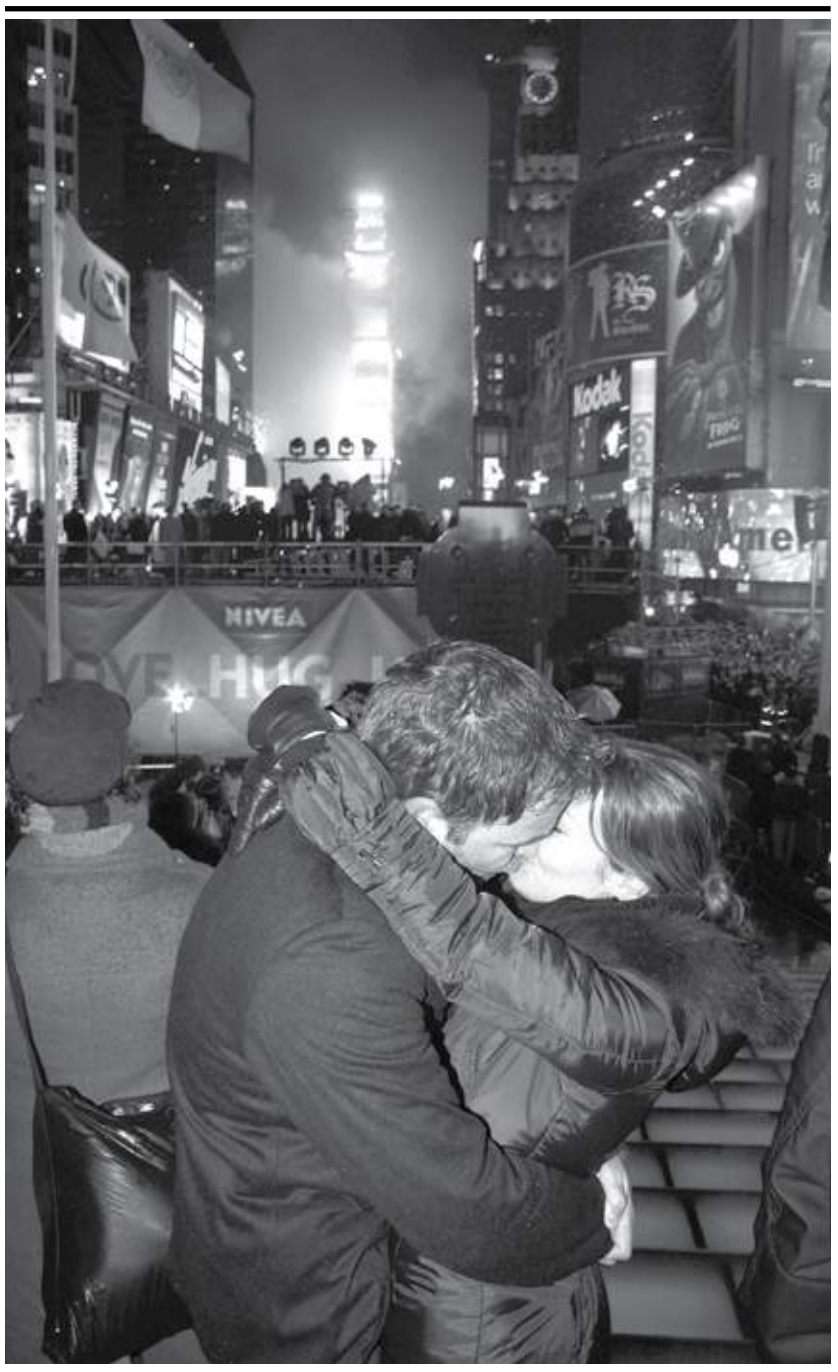
OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Federal prosecutors say they won't file charges against two Nebraska car dealership executives accused of stealing more than 80 vehicles off their own lot. Jan Sharp of the U.S. attorney's office in Omaha on Saturday confirmed that the office had notified Scotts Bluff County authorities of the decision. Rachel Fait, Allen Patch and another Legacy Auto Group executive were arrested in March on suspicion of theft and title fraud after the missing cars and trucks were found in Utah, Wyoming, Las Vegas and Scottsbluff, Neb. In November, Nebraska prosecutors dropped all state charges against the pair to clear the way for possible federal charges. The pair had pleaded not guilty. The state charges could be refilled The statement says that if needed, the FAA will work with American on corrective action.

Clinton foundation draws eclectic donor list

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Bill Clinton's charity drew an international roster of donors last year, ranging from Norway and Oman to foreign lotteries, businessmen and celebrities, a contributor list released under an ethics promise by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton showed. A donor rundown disclosed on New Year's Day by the William J. Clinton Foundation shows that in all, Norway has given $10 million to $25 million to the charity since its founding roughly a decade ago. Oman donated $1 million to $5 million over the years. The list gave cumulative donation totals and didn't say how much each contributor gave last year. The foundation provided The Associated Press with a donor list Friday morning under the heading "William J. Clinton Foundation Publishes Names of 2009 Contributors on Foundation Web site" but later said the disclosure, which included many more foreign governments, covered donors dating back to the charity's inception, and that it wouldn't say who gave in 2009. The foundation changed course Friday afternoon and updated the list to specify 2009 donors.

Nation

Desperate Somalis seek 'back-door' route to US



NEW YEAR COUNTDOWN AP
Mathias Ley of Germany, left, kisses Thurid Kahl of New York at midnight during New Year's Eve festivities in Times Square in New York on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2009.

LANCASTER, Calif. (AP)—The asylum seeker from Somalia hung his head as an immigration judge grilled him about his treacherous journey from the Horn of Africa. By air, sea and land he finally made it to Mexico, and then a taxi delivered him into the arms of U.S. border agents at San Diego.

Islamic militants had killed his brother, Mohamed Ahmed Kheire testified, and majority clan members had beaten his sister. He had to flee Mogadishu to live.

The voice of the judge, beamed by videoconference from Seattle, crackled loudly over a speaker in the mostly empty courtroom near the detention yard in the desert north of Los Angeles. He wanted to know why Kheire had no family testimony to corroborate his asylum claim.

Kheire, 31, said he didn't have e-mail in detention, and didn't think to ask while writing to family on his perilous trek.

It seemed like the end of Kheire's dream as he waited for the judge's ruling. He clasped his hands, his plastic jail bracelet dangling from his wrist, and looked up at the ceiling, murmuring words of prayer.

Kheire is one of hundreds of desperate Somalis in the last two years to have staked everything on a wild asylum gamble by following immigration routes to the United States traditionally traveled by Latinos.

With the suspension of a U.S. refugee program and stepped-up security in the Gulf of Aden and along Mediterranean smuggling routes, more overseas migrants from Somalia are pursuing asylum through what one expert calls the "back door."

"The U.S. has closed most of the doors for Somalis to come in through the refugee program so they've found alternative ways to get in," said Mark Hetfield, senior vice president for policy and programs at the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. "This is their new route."

About 1,500 people from around the world showed up in U.S. airports and on the borders seeking asylum during the 2009 fiscal year, according to statistics from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Somalis were the biggest group to make the journey, with most arriving in San Diego. More than 240 Somalis arrived during that period—more than twice the number from the year before.

Like Kheire, they have been shuttled to immigration detention centers in California while legal advocates have scurried to find lawyers and translators to help them navigate the country's immigration courts.

Many end up defending themselves. Those who lose may remain temporarily. Somalis may be deported, but immigrant advocates say authorities often do not send them back immediately because of difficulties making the trip.

For many, it has become increasingly dangerous to stay in Somalia. The African nation has not had a functional government since 1991 when warlords overthrew longtime dictator Mohamed Siad Barre and then turned on each other, plunging the country into chaos.

Somali refugees say they are fleeing repression by armed militias defending majority clans and the Islamic militant group al-Shabab, which has been labeled a terrorist organization by the United States.

"There are stories about houses being blown up by rocket launchers that you don't hear coming out of other countries as a normal occurrence," said James Duff Lyall, an attorney for the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, who has represented several Somali asylum seekers in Lancaster. "The consistently horrific stories are striking."

In 2007, Kheire's brother was shot in the head in his music store in Mogadishu after refusing to bow to al-Shabab's demands that he shutter the shop. A year later, Kheire's sister was beaten with a stick and left bleeding outside a school.

That night Kheire, whose family belongs to a minority clan, was visited by three men who rammed his chest with a rifle butt and debated whether to kill him.

2010 situation grows more difficult for Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP)—An already difficult situation for Democrats in Congress is worsening as the 2010 political season opens.

To minimize expected losses in next fall's election, President Barack Obama's party is testing a line of attack that resurrects George W. Bush as a boogeyman and castigates Republicans as cozy with Wall Street.

Four House Democrats from swing districts have recently chosen not to seek re-election, bringing to 11 the number of retirements that could leave Democratic-held seats vulnerable to Republicans. More Democratic retirements are expected.

Over the holiday break, another Democrat, freshman Rep. Parker Griffith of Alabama, defected to the GOP. "I can no longer align myself with a party that continues to pursue legislation that is bad for our country, hurts our economy, and drives us further and further into debt," said Griffith, who voted against Democrats' three biggest initiatives in 2009: health care, financial regulation and reducing global warming.

In the Senate, at least four Democrats—including Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and five-term Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd—are in serious trouble. The party could also lose its grip on seats Obama held in Illinois and Vice President Joe Biden long occupied in Delaware.

Going into 2010, Democrats held a 257-178 majority in the House and an effective 60-40 majority in the Senate, including two independents who align themselves with Democrats.

US official: Extremists seek new ways to attack US

WASHINGTON (AP)—A top counterterrorism official is warning that al-Qaida and other extremists are working to test U.S. defenses and launch an attack on American soil.

National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter says the failed Christmas Day attempt to bring down a U.S. airliner is the starkest reminder of that threat.

Leiter said in a statement Saturday that officials "know with absolute certainty" that al-Qaida and others are trying to refine their methods.

The center is part of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. It draws experts from the CIA, FBI, Pentagon and other agencies who try to ensure that clues about potential attacks are not missed.

Terrorism expert Harvey Kushner of Long Island University said a significant concern is that many U.S. airports don't currently have the necessary technology to protect flights from the type of explosives attack attempted on Christmas.

The suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, apparently assembled an explosive device, including 80 grams of Pentrite, or PETN, in the aircraft toilet of a Detroit-bound Northwest flight, then planned to detonate it with a syringe of chemicals. Passengers intervened, and the plan failed.

"What's disturbing about this is we're almost nine years after 9/11 and billions of dollars have been spent and we don't have in place a system which can make us safe in the air," Kushner, chair of the school's Criminal Justice Department told The Associated Press. "You'll never be able to harden the targets to rule out terrorist activity. But we need to spend more money and have more concentration on the dangers in the skies."

ACROSS THE NATION

Smoke smell sends NYC-bound jet back to Boston

BOSTON (AP)—A New York-bound plane has returned safely to Boston's Logan International Airport after a pilot smelled smoke in the cockpit minutes after takeoff. Airport spokesman Matthew Brelis says Flight 1379 landed safely Saturday and returned to the gate under its own power. Delta spokesman Carlos Santos says the airline was investigating the cause of the smoke smell Saturday. In the meantime, Santos says the plane's passengers were rebooked for an early afternoon flight. Brelis said the Flight 1379 took off for LaGuardia Airport in New York at about 10:45 a.m. carrying 34 people, including crew. He says a pilot turned back about eight minutes into the flight.

3rd body found after Detroit apartment fire

DETROIT (AP)—Fire investigators say they've found the body of a third person who died in a blaze at an apartment building in Detroit. The Detroit Free Press reports that the body of 67-year-old Ann Louise Roeder was found Saturday. Fire Capt. Steve Varnas says Roeder was among several people unaccounted for after the fire Thursday night at the five-story Huntington Hotel. Varnas says the others may be staying with friends or relatives or at shelters or hotels. The fire also injured a resident and two firefighters. The names of the two men whose bodies were found previously have not been released.

Arrest made in Fla. Thanksgiving killings

WESTON, Fla. (AP)—A Florida man suspected of killing four family members in a Thanksgiving shooting was arrested Saturday in the Florida Keys, authorities said. Jupiter Police Sgt. Scott Pascarella said Paul Merhige was taken into custody by U.S. Marshals and Monroe County Sheriff's deputies late Saturday at a motel in Long Key. Pascarella said in a news release that the officers received a tip that Merhige was in the area and took him into custody without a struggle.

Calif. pastor takes in $2.4M after donations plea

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (AP)—Evangelical pastor Rick Warren's plea for donations to fill a $900,000 deficit at his Southern California megachurch brought in $2.4 million, Warren announced to cheers during a sermon at the church on Saturday. Warren said the amount raised after the appeal was posted online Wednesday included only money parishioners brought in person to Saddleback Church by New Year's Eve. More was arriving by hand and by mail, he said. "This is pretty amazing," Warren told his congregation. "I don't think any church has gotten a cash offering like that off a letter."

Pioneering plaintiff wants DC's 1st gay marriage

WASHINGTON (AP)—Craig Dean's first wedding was attended by thousands, and as he recited his vows, gay couples behind him on Constitution Avenue echoed their own. It was 1993, and Dean and boyfriend Patrick Gill headlined what was billed as the largest gay marriage ceremony at the time. Dean, 29, and Gill, 26, were celebrities after suing the city of Washington for denying them a marriage license. They'd been on CNN, were profiled in The Washington Post and sat on Oprah's couch. And though they lost their landmark case, the city last month finally did what it had refused to do back then: Legalize gay marriage.

Asia

Gloom and fury as Pakistan attack toll nears 100

SHAH HASAN KHEL, Pakistan (AP)—Tribal elders in a Pakistani village where a suicide car bomber killed nearly 100 people insisted Saturday that residents will keep defying the Taliban, even as the bloodshed laid bare the risks facing the citizens' militias that make up a key piece of Pakistan's arsenal against extremism.

The New Year's Day attack on the northwest village of Shah Hasan Khel was one of the deadliest in a surge of bombings that has killed more than 600 across Pakistan since October. Police believe the attacker meant to detonate his 550 pounds (250 kilograms) of explosives at a meeting of tribesmen who supervise an anti-Taliban militia. Instead, the blast went off at a nearby outdoor volleyball court, killing at least 96 people.

The explosion leveled some three dozen mud-brick homes and covered the village with dust, smoke and the smell of burning flesh. On Saturday, numerous homes received visitors offering condolences, and funeral prayers were held. Many of the residents in the village of 5,000, which lies near Pakistan's militant-filled tribal belt, were too scared to name any possible culprits, but others were defiant.

"The people are in severe grief and fear—it is a demoralizing thing," said Raham Dil Khan, a rifle-toting, 70-something member of the tribal council. "We want the government to provide security, but one thing is very clear: The committee will stand against every type of terrorism and despite this great loss we will continue our work."

None of the elders at the gathering was killed. The 28-member council had been debating punishing relatives of militants suspected in the recent killing of a fellow tribal leader, Khan said.

Across Pakistan's northwest, where the police force is thin, underpaid and under-equipped, various villages and tribes have taken security into their own hands over the past two years by setting up citizen militias to fend off the Taliban.

The government has encouraged such "lashkars," and in some areas they have proven key to reducing militant activity. In the Bajur tribal region, for instance, the militias helped turn the tide against militants during a 2008-2009 army offensive. And in the northwest's Swat Valley, citizens have set up militias to prevent militants from staging a comeback as the army continues an offensive there.

The militia movement has its roots in ethnic Pashtun tribal traditions that go back generations and encourage vengeance. It has been compared to the largely successful U.S. efforts to persuade Sunni tribesmen to turn on al-Qaida in Iraq.

Afghan officials also are encouraging tribal militias on their side of the border, where the Afghan Taliban have staged a comeback.

Pakistani tribal leaders who face off with the militants do so at grave personal risk. Several suicide attacks have targeted meetings of anti-Taliban elders, and militants often go after individuals.

One reason militancy has spread in Pakistan's tribal belt - a semi-autonomous region where tribes, not the government, have long wielded the most authority - is because insurgents have slain dozens of elders and filled the resulting power vacuum.

Shah Hasan Khel is a village filled with many farmers and other laborers. Its residents are mainly Pashtuns, the same group that make up the bulk of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban.

The two movements are separate but linked, and both oppose their countries' U.S. allied governments. U.S. and Pakistani army offensives aim to squeeze the militants on both sides of the border, though many of the insurgents are believed to slip easily back and forth across the porous boundary.

AP

Pakistan Shiite Muslim women hold a rally to condemn Monday's suicide bombing over a Shiites procession, Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010 in Karachi, Pakistan.

RP volcano calming; thousands head home

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Thousands of villagers evacuated from near the Philippines' most active volcano headed home Saturday after scientists said the rumbling mountain was showing signs it was calming down.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology early Saturday lowered a five-stage alert over Mayon volcano from level 4 to 3, saying there was "less probability of a hazardous explosive eruption."

Most of the 47,000 evacuees whose homes are within a 5-mile (8-kilometer) danger zone have been told it is safe to return home, said Cedric Daep, head of the disaster management office of Albay province, about 212 miles (340 kilometers) southeast of Manila.

Only about 5,000 whose homes are on the southeastern slope of the volcano and in the path of lava flows remained in shelters, he said.

Chief state volcanologist Renato Solidum said scientists were closely monitoring the volcano and will raise the alert in case of a resurgence of activity.

"At the moment, the activity of the volcano is declining, but the volcanic unrest is still high," he said.

The institute said in a statement that it noted "a declining trend in Mayon volcano's activity."

It cited the absence of ash ejections over the past four days, weak steam emissions, declining amounts of sulfur dioxide gas—an indicator of rising magma. It also said majority of earthquakes recorded in the past days have been associated with rockfalls, not rising magma.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda has ordered that all schools be prepared to reopen for classes next week, Jukes Nunez of the provincial disaster office said. Many schools had been retasked as shelters since the evacuations began Dec. 15.

The evacuees heading home also will be given enough food for three days and will continue to receive supplies already set aside for them by the World Food Program, Nunez said.

Workers contain fuel leak in China river

BEIJING (AP)—Workers in northern China dug diversion channels and used floating dams and solidifying agents to stem a diesel fuel leak from flowing into the Yellow River, the water source for millions of Chinese.

More than 700 workers worked overnight into Sunday morning to contain a spill that leaked from a pipeline into the Wei River in Shaanxi province following a construction accident Wednesday.

The Wei is a major tributary of the Yellow River, China's second-longest, whose water quality has deteriorated rapidly as discharge from factories has increased and water levels drop because of diversion for booming cities.

Vice Premier Li Keqiang ordered local officials to "strictly prevent leakage and pollution from flowing into the Yellow River and ensure the safety of drinking water for the masses," according to a Shaanxi provincial government news release issued Sunday.

It said the fuel slick had been contained in the Wei and no threats to sources of water for human or animal use in the Yellow River had been discovered. Earlier reports said that, at its greatest extent, the fuel slick had spread out along a 20-mile (33-kilometer) stretch of the river.

Workers laid a total of 17 floating dams across the Wei to contain the leakage, and specialized chemicals were being spread to solidify the fuel and speed cleanup, according to a news release from the environmental protection bureau in the city of Weihai where the leak occurred.

Workers also dug diversion trenches opposite the site of the leakage to prevent accumulated fuel flowing downstream, the bureau said.

The pipeline's owner, China National Petroleum Corp., said it had plugged the leak in the pipeline and had removed a "large amount" of contaminated water, mud and sand.

Afghan parliament rejects Karzai's Cabinet list

KABUL (AP)—A chastened President Hamid Karzai must submit new Cabinet picks after defiant lawmakers rejected 17 of his 24 nominees Saturday, including a powerful warlord and the country's only woman minister.

The Afghan parliament rejected nominees viewed as Karzai's political cronies, those believed to be under the influence of warlords and others deemed unqualified.

"I think, unfortunately, that the criteria were either ethnicity or bribery or money," lawmaker Fawzia Kufi said of Karzai's picks.

The vote was a setback to Karzai, though one political analyst in Kabul speculated that it could free up the president to appoint qualified professionals rather than settle political debts.

"There were lots of demands on Karzai from people asking for Cabinet positions because they campaigned for him," Mohammad Qasim Akhgar said. "This was the only way he could reward them and if parliament didn't approve them, it wasn't his fault. Very soon, Karzai will come out with a new list with the names of people he really wants to have in his Cabinet."

The new Cabinet is a bellwether for the U.S. and other nations hoping a stronger government will keep disenchanted Afghans from siding with the Taliban after Karzai won a second five-year term last year in a disputed election rife with ballot-box stuffing.

The lawmakers approved a handful of incumbent ministers favored by the West and instrumental to the war effort.

Karzai has defended his choices, which he announced late last month after several delays. He said his proposed Cabinet represented a balance of the nation's ethnic factions.

But parliamentarians weren't happy. They complained the list looked too much like the existing Cabinet and spelled another five years of business as usual for the Karzai government, which has been criticized as being corrupt and ineffective.

ASIAN BRIEFS

$3.2 million in watches stolen from Tokyo store

TOKYO (AP)—A robber bored a hole through the wall of jewelry shop and walked off with about 200 luxury watches worth 300 million yen ($3.2 million) in Tokyo's upscale Ginza district, police said Saturday. Investigators discovered a 16 to 20 inch (40 to 50 centimeter) hole in one of the store's walls, said Shinya Watanabe, a spokesman for the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. Last February, 50 million yen ($540,000) in jewelry was stolen from another Ginza store through a hole in a concrete wall. Police said it was not clear whether the two thefts were linked, or if the thief entered the store to remove the watches.

North Korea holds massive New Year's rally

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Tens of thousands of North Koreans rallied in the capital Saturday to support the communist government's policies for the new year, including improved relations with the U.S. and South Korea and a higher standard of living. The crowd braved chilly weather to pledge loyalty to leader Kim Jong Il as top officials applauded from a balcony overlooking Pyongyang's main square. Video from broadcaster APTN showed Kim did not attend the rally. North Korea—which does not tolerate any political opposition—stages the annual rally to bolster public support for the government's New Year policies, announced in an editorial in major newspapers.

10 dead, 47 injured in train accidents in India

LUCKNOW, India (AP)—Four trains collided Saturday in two separate accidents caused by dense winter fog in northern India, killing 10 people and injuring 47 others, police and railway officials said. The first accident took place near the town of Etawah, about 170 miles (270 kilometers) southwest of Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state, when a train entering a station rammed another train that had stopped there. Ten people, including the driver of one of the trains, were injured, according to Brij Lal, a senior police official. A second similar accident occurred near Kanpur, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) southwest of Lucknow, and left 10 people dead and 37 others injured, some seriously, Lal said.

World

Mexico announces capture of alleged drug lord

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican police have captured alleged drug lord Carlos Beltran Leyva, just two weeks after his even more powerful brother was killed in a shootout with troops—back-to-back victories in President Felipe Calderon's drug war.

The Public Safety Department said in a statement Saturday night that Carlos Beltran Leyva was arrested in Culiacan, the capital of the Pacific coast state of Sinaloa, where he and several of his brothers were born and allegedly started their gang.

Two weeks ago, his brother Arturo, reputed chief of the Beltran Leyva cartel, was killed in a shootout with Mexican marines in the central city of Cuernavaca. He was the highest-ranking cartel suspect taken down since Calderon sent tens of thousands of soldiers and federal police across the country three years ago to fight brutal drug gangs.

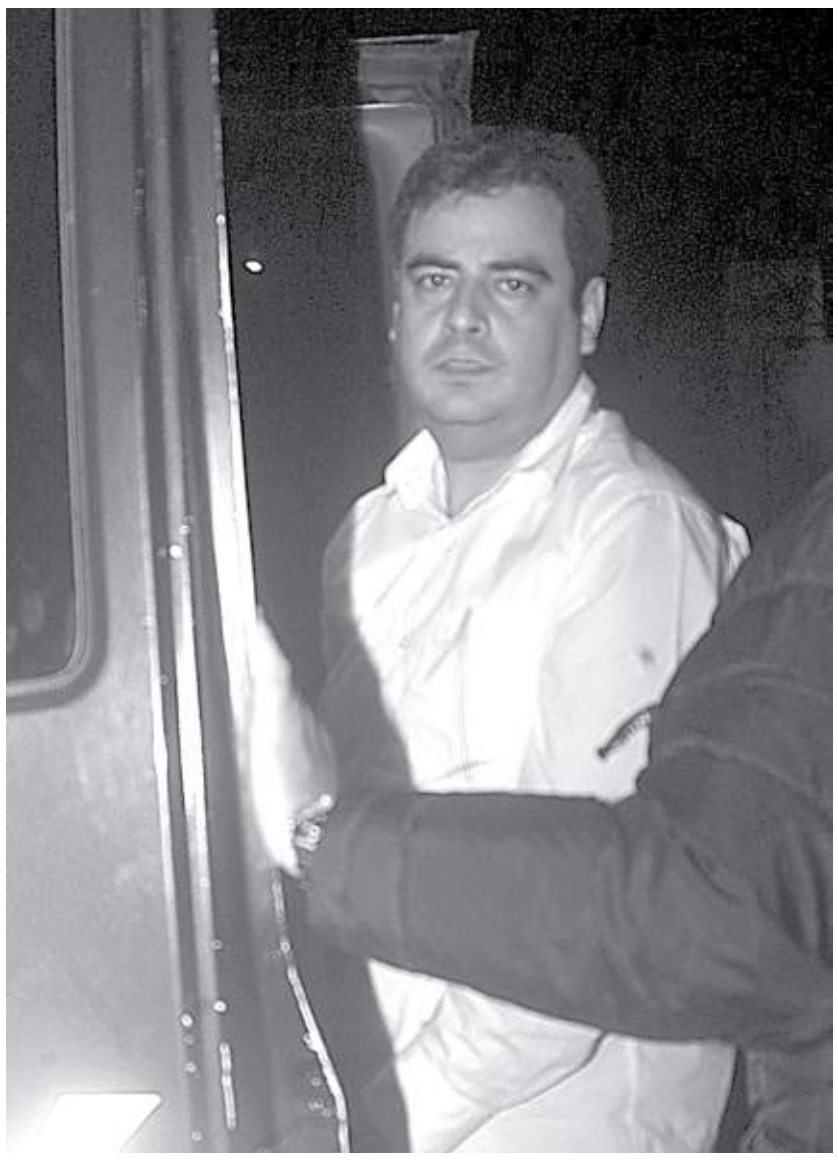
Mexican officials in the past have described Carlos Beltran Levya, 40, as a key member of the gang, but it was unclear if he took over as chief of the cartel after his brother died.

A third brother, Alfredo, was arrested in January 2008. At least one other brother, Mario, remains at large and is listed as one of Mexico's 24 most-wanted drug lords, with a $2 million reward offered for his capture. Carlos Beltran was not included on the list, although the Public Safety Department said there had been a warrant for his arrest since 2008.

Officials from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, whose intelligence information helped track down Arturo Beltran Leyva, have said one of the brothers would likely fill the void. DEA intelligence chief Anthony Placido said last month the U.S. was getting sporadic reports of plots to break Alfredo Beltran Leyva out of prison.

The arrest of Carlos Beltran Leyva sent a strong signal that Calderon's government has no intention of backing down in its campaign to destroy the cartel despite a chilling reprisal attack for Arturo Beltran Leyva' death. Days after he was killed, gunmen massacred the mother and three other relatives of a marine who died in the Dec. 16 shootout.

Calderon vowed he would not be intimidated. However, authorities were far quieter in announcing Carlos Beltran Leyva's capture, waiting three days to make the arrest public.



AP

This photo released by Mexico's Federal Security Secretary Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010, shows Carlos Beltran Leyva at an undisclosed location after his arrest.

Iran warns West it will make its own nuclear fuel

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran set a one-month deadline Saturday for the West to accept its counterproposal to a U.N.-drafted nuclear plan and warned that otherwise it will produce reactor fuel at a higher level of enrichment on its own.

The warning was a show of defiance and a hardening of Iran's stance over its nuclear program, which the West fears masks an effort to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Tehran insists its program is only for peaceful purposes, such as electricity production, and says it has no intention of making a bomb.

"We have given them an ultimatum. There is one month left and that is by the end of January," Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said, speaking on state television.

Even if Tehran started working on the fuel production immediately, it would likely take years before it could master the technology to turn uranium enriched to the level of 20 percent into the fuel rods it needs for a medical research reactor.

Still, any threat to enrich uranium to a higher level is likely to rattle the world powers that have been trying to persuade Iran to forgo enrichment altogether.

Enrichment is at the center of the West's concerns because at high levels it can be used in making nuclear weapons. At lower levels, enriched uranium is used in the production of fuel for nuclear power plants.

Iran dismissed an end-of-2009 deadline imposed by the Obama administration and its international partners to accept a U.N.-drafted deal to swap most of its enriched uranium for nuclear fuel. The deal would reduce Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium, limiting—at least for the moment—its capability to make nuclear weapons.

The U.S. and its allies have demanded Iran accept the terms of the U.N.-brokered plan without changes.

Instead, Tehran came up with a counterproposal: to have the West either sell nuclear fuel to Iran, or swap its nuclear fuel for Iran's enriched uranium in smaller batches instead of at once as the U.N. plan requires.

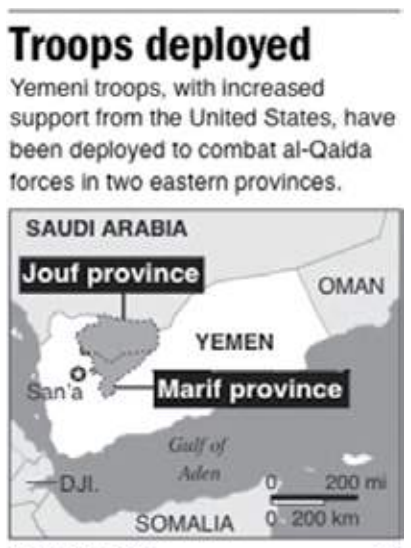
Britain, US to fund Yemen anti-terror police unit

LONDON (AP)—The British government said Sunday that Prime Minister Gordon Brown and U.S. President Barack Obama had agreed to fund a counterterrorism police unit in Yemen to tackle the rising terrorist threat from the country.

Brown's Downing Street Office said the United Kingdom and the United States had also agreed to increase support for Yemen's coast guard operation. Pirates operating in the waters between Somalia and Yemen have seized four ships in the last week.

In Washington, however, a senior administration official said he's unaware of any new joint effort that is ready to be announced. The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss sensitive matters, said American and British forces currently provide the Yemeni police counterterrorism assistance.

Downing Street said Brown and Obama will push the U.N. Security Council to create a larger peacekeeping force for Somalia.



The British government unveiled its plans in the wake of the thwarted Christmas Day bombing of a passenger plane bound for Detroit.

Brown called last week for a high-level international meeting later this month to devise ways to counter radicalization in Yemen. He said an international approach is needed to combat the increasing influence of al-Qaida in Yemen. The terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the failed attack.

Downing Street said the government of Yemen had been consulted over the decision to boost the country's coast guard and police operations.

The White House said Washington stands ready to work with allies to fight extremism. The official welcomed Brown's move earlier to lead an international conference on Jan. 28 to devise ways to counter radicalization in the country, the poorest in the Arab world.

The official also was unable to confirm any plans to push for a larger U.N. peacekeeping force for Somalia.

US commander in Iraq says troop drawdown on track

FORWARD OPERATING BASE COBRA, Iraq (AP)—The nearly two-month delay in holding Iraq's nationwide elections will not keep American combat troops from leaving the country as scheduled by the end of August, the top U.S. commander in Iraq told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday.

"The plan that I put together originally gave me plenty of flexibility, and part of that flexibility was that the election would be delayed, so I built flexibility into our plan," Gen. Ray Odierno said at a military base in Iraq's Diyala Province. "I feel comfortable that we're on track."

Iraq was originally scheduled to hold key elections in January that will determine who will lead the country as American forces go home, but political wrangling over how to apportion votes in a law needed to carry out the balloting delayed the vote until March 7.

Under a U.S. plan, all combat troops are slated to leave Iraq by the end of August. The remaining 50,000 U.S. forces will be doing non-combat operations such as training.

Around early May, if the country is on stable footing, Odierno will be begin moving troops out of Iraq. There are currently about 110,000 U.S. forces in Iraq, and Odierno said by March 7 there will be roughly 100,000 troops here.

"We have it well planned out. They have excess equipment that is leaving now ahead of time. ... It's four months, and what we really plan on doing is 12,500 (troops) a month, and that should see us through," he said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Volcano erupts in Colombia; no reports of injuries

BOGOTA (AP)—The Galeras volcano in southeastern Colombia erupted Saturday night, but there were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries, authorities said. Carlos Ivan Marquez, national aid director for the Red Cross, said officials might need to evacuate 8,000 people as a precaution. He said temporary shelters and aid supplies were available. The volcano erupted at 7:43 p.m., according to the Volcanology and Seismological Observatory in Pasto, the provincial capital of 500,000 people that is just over 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Galeras.

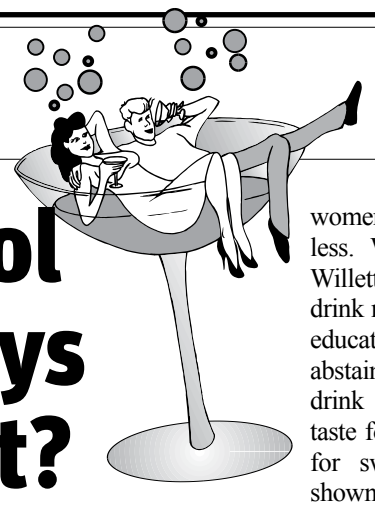
Hopes fade in hunt for Brazil mudslide survivors

ANGRA DOS REIS, Brazil (AP)—Firefighters using heavy machinery, shovels and bare hands dug for survivors Saturday but only found corpses under a mountain of red earth and crushed lodgings—the worst of a spate of mudslides and floods that killed at least 64 people in southeastern Brazil. At least 26 people died in the New Year's Day slide that buried an upscale resort on the island of Ilha Grande, including the 18-year-old daughter of the couple who built the waterfront lodge at the foot of a cliff side covered with rain forest. Authorities said no foreigners were known to be among the dead and there were few details about those who died.

Somali charged in attack on Danish cartoonist

COPENHAGEN (AP)—An ax-wielding Somali man with suspected al-Qaida links was charged Saturday with two counts of attempted murder after breaking into the home of a Danish artist whose Prophet Muhammad cartoon outraged the Muslim world three years ago. The suspect, who was shot twice by a police officer responding to the scene, was rolled into a Danish court on a stretcher, his face covered. He was ordered held for four weeks on preliminary charges of attempting to murder the cartoonist, as well as the police officer who shot him. Efforts to protect the artist—74-year-old Kurt Westergaard—were immediately stepped up, as he was moved to an undisclosed location.

Health & Fitness



Raising a glass of alcohol now and then isn't always such a bad thing—or is it?

By JENNIFER LARUE HUGET
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

A few months ago I received a book called "The Two Martini Diet" (Authorhouse, 2008), in which Jerry Sorluccodocuments his success at losing more than 100 pounds without forgoing his daily cocktails. He doesn't break new diet-book ground: Sorlucco follows well-established practices such as controlling portion sizes, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, and managing his calorie intake and expenditure to accommodate those drinks.

I've kept the book on my desk because I'm intrigued by the interplay between healthful eating and alcohol consumption. Is it really possible, I've wondered, to incorporate alcoholic beverages into a healthful diet and lifestyle, or are those of us who hope it is possible just fooling ourselves?

Drinking is often considered a vice. But unlike smoking or using recreational drugs, behaviors for which it's hard to claim any health benefits, evidence is mounting that partaking of alcohol can promote not only health but also longevity.

I'm aware that my own affection for martinis may skew my opinion about the merits of including cocktails in one's diet. So I turned to some experts — Walter Willett, chair of the department of nutrition and a professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, and Donald Hensrud, a specialist in preventive and internal medicine at the Mayo Clinic and medical editor in chief of "The Mayo Clinic Diet" book, to be released this week — to help me put alcohol in its proper place. I hope you'll join me in reviewing their comments and deciding for yourself whether drinking belongs in your life.

First, though, let's agree on some basics: Pregnant women shouldn't drink, and people with family histories of alcoholism and certain cancers should think very carefully before lifting a glass and probably should abstain. If we choose to drink, we should avoid bingeing, which erases any potential health benefits. And never, ever should we get behind the wheel of a car after imbibing.

Beyond that, drinking has its pros and cons, depending on your own health and the health conditions you're most concerned about. Here's a breakdown of what we know about alcohol's effects on various aspects of our bodies and minds:

Heart disease

Willett says: "There's clear evidence that alcohol reduces heart-disease risk if consumed in moderation. It's substantial, a 30 to 40 percent reduction." And, he adds, "Contrary to what the French say, it is the alcohol" that confers the benefit, regardless of whether one drinks wine, beer or spirits.

Hensrud attributes half of the cardiovascular benefit associated with drinking to the fact that alcohol raises levels of HDL, or "good" cholesterol, in the bloodstream. Beyond that, he says, it thins blood and decreases platelet aggregation, which helps reduce clotting. Alcohol may help decrease inflammation, a key player in many diseases (including cancer and heart disease) and reduces risk of ischemic stroke, which occurs when a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain is blocked by a clot.

Although alcohol is a depressant, some of its benefits may derive from its salubrious effect on our mood. In moderate amounts, Hensrud says, alcohol can help reduce stress, which is increasingly recognized as contributing to ill health.

Before you hook up your IV to a bottle of gin, Hensrud says that alcohol increases blood pressure and triglycerides in the blood, both of which can contribute to heart disease. Drinking can also cause cardiomyopathy (in which the heart doesn't beat properly), though Hensrud says that risk is outweighed by the heart-health benefits noted above.

In the end, "If someone's at very low risk of heart disease anyway," Willett says, "there's very little to be garnered by adding alcohol" to the diet.

Cancer and other diseases

"Even at a modest level, alcohol consumption increases breast cancer risk, and that risk increases in step-wise fashion the more alcohol is consumed," Willett says. The increased risk to women who drink two drinks per day is enough to offset the reduced mortality associated with mammography "and then some," he says. There's some evidence—"not conclusive"—that adequate folic acid intake may somewhat offset that risk.

Alcohol consumption slightly reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes, Willett says. Hensrud notes that moderate drinking is also linked to reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Excessive alcohol consumption raises uric acid levels, which may predispose a person to gout. It's linked to cancers of the oral cavity, liver, stomach, breast (though the increase for moderate drinkers is modest), and colon and (among smokers who also drink) head and neck cancers. Drinking is tied to increased incidence of pancreatitis, gastritis and cirrhosis of the liver. Among very heavy drinkers, alcohol can interfere with the body's ability to absorb certain nutrients.

Weight control

Alcohol is pure calories and offers no nutrition. Still, "studies show that women who consume alcohol weigh less. We're not sure exactly why," Willett says. Women and others who drink moderately may tend to be more educated and health-conscious than abstainers, he suggests. Or people who drink may consume less sugar, their taste for alcohol replacing their "drive for sweetness." Research also has shown that people who drink heavily tend to exercise more vigorously than non-drinkers.

Hensrud observes, "On average, people who consume moderate amounts of alcohol weigh the same or less than those who don't drink." It may be, he says, that the body burns alcohol's calories more easily than those from other carbohydrates. But alcohol use "does seem to increase fat deposition in the abdomen," giving you a beer belly.

Alcohol dependence

"I'm not trying to sound like a prude," Hensrud says, "but when people rely on alcohol for relaxation, it can become a crutch. There's a line some people cross and don't even know it."

"Nobody intends on becoming an alcoholic," he continues. While some people have a genetic predisposition to alcoholism, it's not a good idea for anybody to drink every day," he says. "It can become a habit and sneak up to bite you."

Longevity

"People who consume moderate amounts of alcohol have a lower risk of dying than people who don't drink at all," Hensrud says. That reduced risk probably is tied to lower incidence of heart disease among drinkers, he says.

But when people move beyond moderate consumption, alcohol's benefits start to be countered by increased risk of cancer, homicide, suicide and motor vehicle accidents, Hensrud says. In fact, he notes, research published in 2004 in the Journal of the American Medical Association attributed 85,000 U.S. deaths a year to alcohol consumption.

"At a moderate level, the overall benefits of alcohol consumption appear to outweigh the risks," Hensrud says. "But if the risks do happen, it's high stakes."

I'll drink to that.

What does 'moderate' mean?

By JENNIFER LARUE HUGET
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

"Moderate" drinking means no more than two drinks per day for men, and no more than one drink per day for women.

A single drink equals:
- 12 ounces of beer
- 5 ounces of wine
- 1 1/2 ounces of hard liquor (one shot)

How many calories are in that drink?
- 1 beer equals 150 calories
- 1 glass of wine equals 100 calories
- 1 shot of straight liquor equals 100 calories

SOURCE: "The Mayo Clinic Diet" (Good Books, 2010)

The year is over; did they meet their fitness goals?

WASHINGTON—You've heard it a million times: Staying fit is a marathon, not a sprint. We all start fitness programs with the best of intentions, fired up about another way to burn calories or reach an athletic goal. But sooner or later many of us lose interest, or get too busy, or become bored with our routines, or hit a roadblock. And then we either stop exercising or seek yet another solution.

Because we spend most of the year recommending sometimes exotic ways of toning up and slimming down, it seems only fair to check back and find out how some of the people I've talked to are doing.

The results of my limited survey, it turns out, are fairly encouraging.

The racewalker

When I met Tom Gargan last summer, he was looking for a low-impact outdoor sport that would help him maintain his cardiovascular fitness so he could continue to play tennis, ski and windsurf as he grew older. Running had wrecked his knees. So there he was on a beautiful summer morning, learning to racewalk at a clinic held by the Potomac Valley Track Club.

When I called him recently, he was proud to say that he'd stuck with it. He went to two more instructional clinics and concluded that he was "not going to get into it at the competitive level at all. ... I don't think you'll ever see me on ESPN or in the Olympics."

But four and sometimes five days a week, Gargan said, he either racewalks or takes a more traditional walk for 25 minutes around Fort Detrick in Frederick, Md., where he works at the U.S. Army Center for Environmental Health Research.

"The thing I notice (about racewalking) is that you can really get your heart rate up," he said.

Focusing on the technical aspect of the sport helps take his mind off work problems, said Gargan. To racewalk properly, you have to follow two rules. First, you must maintain contact with the ground at all times. Second, the forward, or advancing, leg must be locked at the knee from the time it touches the ground in front of you until it passes the vertical position beneath you.

Gargan has purchased a balaclava and said he plans to keep up the routine through the winter. "It's so easy to miss one day, and then it goes into two days and then three days, and then it's a distant memory," he said.

The senior

Henry David had a different kind of goal when I attended his exercise class in July at Fox Hill assisted living facility in Bethesda, Md. David, 86, had not taken good care of his body and walked with the aid of a cane. He wanted to get rid of it.

And he did, at least indoors, though he still uses it outdoors as a precaution. He credits his progress to three-times-per-week classes at Fox Hill: one balance class, one session on the weight machines and one private session exercising in the pool with trainer Anthony Absalon. Recently, he said, the medication for a lung infection has made him wobbly again. But he is recovering.

"Now the trick is to get back into training and get rid of the cane once again," he said.

I asked David how he'd accomplished his goal, and he said: "Give the credit to Anthony. He is a very personable, deeply interested person who is loved by everybody."

I'm happy to do that. Along with a nod toward the marvelous adaptability of the human body, even in old age.

The ultramarathoner

Now my personal favorite: The story of Elton Horst, an ultramarathoner from Hagerstown, Md., who once held the record in the JFK 50 Mile race. Through a variety of circumstances, Horst, who recently turned 64, found himself with a heart problem and no health insurance.

Word of his plight on the JFK 50 Web site brought in $5,000 to pay off his hospital debt. My recent column on Horst yielded $2,290 more, plus an offer of legal help (from a JFK runner) and some medical advice (from another).

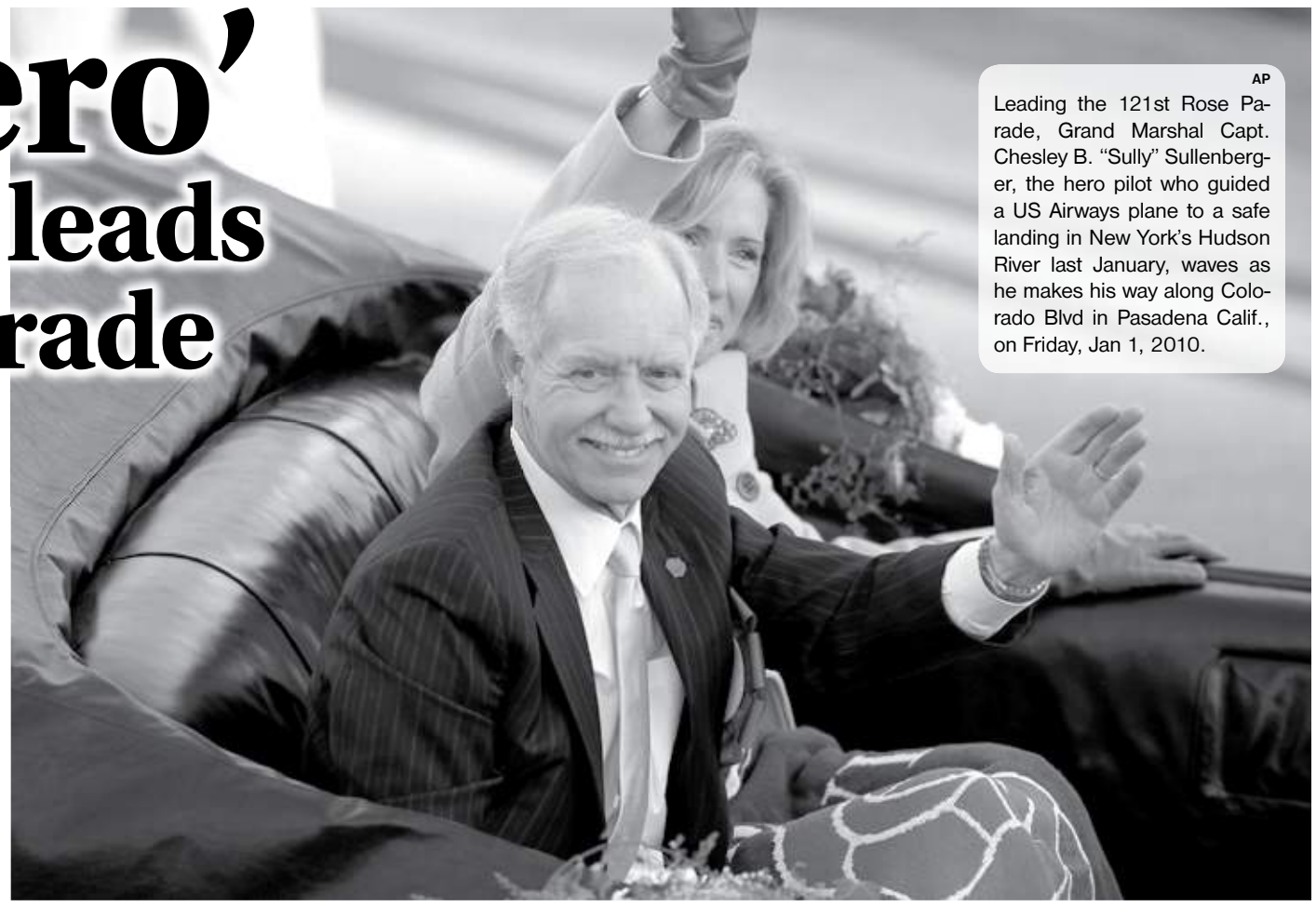
A former student of Horst's at Eastern Mennonite University who hadn't heard from him in 30 years sent $100, saying that Horst had been instrumental in his understanding of the Bible.

Because of his preexisting condition, it was difficult for Horst to find traditional insurance, he said. He has purchased cut-rate coverage for $70 a month that guarantees him a discount of 20 to 60 percent on any health care he may need for the next year. The rest of the money will stay in a fund at the Cumberland Valley Athletic Club to pay for deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses Horst may have until he qualifies for Medicare a year from now, according to Mike Spinnler, the club's president, who orchestrated the fund-raising drive.

Horst is a private person, a man of few words who said he wants donors to know that he is "deeply grateful for everything that everyone has done."

Life & Style

‘Real hero’
Sullenberger leads 2010 Rose Parade



AP
Leading the 121st Rose Parade, Grand Marshal Capt. Chesley B. “Sully” Sullenberger, the hero pilot who guided a US Airways plane to a safe landing in New York’s Hudson River last January, waves as he makes his way along Colorado Blvd in Pasadena Calif., on Friday, Jan 1, 2010.

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—After a run of celebrity grand marshals, a real American hero led the Rose Parade on Friday.

Onlookers stood and cheered as Capt. Chesley B. “Sully” Sullenberger III rode down Colorado Boulevard in a vintage 1928 Pierce Arrow with his wife, Lorrie, and two daughters as part of the annual armada of flower-draped floats, marching bands and prancing horses.

Sullenberger said he did not hesitate when asked to serve as grand marshal because his family has watched the parade when he was growing up in Texas.

“It’s really an American institution, a celebration of American values,” he said after the parade. “I think people see those in me, and I’m glad.”

Parade-goer Hilda Roy held a hand-painted, fluorescent sign that read, “We (heart) you Sully!” She waved and screamed the name of the man who landed a stricken jetliner on New York’s Hudson River and was thrilled when Sullenberger waved back.

“We come every year, but when we found out he was grand marshal, we were really excited,” Roy, 48, said. “He’s a real hero, not just a celebrity, and a real person, too.”

The 121st Rose Parade had something for everyone.

Under signature sunny Southern California skies, onlookers gasped when the cannons of Honda’s three-masted, sailing ship float boomed and shot sparklers and smoke rings toward the bleachers.

A float celebrating Mexico’s bicentennial featured Mexico City’s landmark Angel of Independence and an intricate flower Aztec calendar, as well as dancers costumed in traditional regional dress.

A swarm of children wearing butterfly wings while cruising on inline skates also got a round of applause as they twirled in front of a float depicting the city of Shanghai.

The Kansai Honor Band from Japan rallied the crowd with “Thriller” dance moves and a color guard sporting teased hair and kimonos.

The parade came 20 hours after hundreds of thousands of people began staking out sidewalk space along the route for the annual New Year’s Eve celebration. They lugged sleeping bags, lawn chairs and party favors, then spent the night under the light of a rare blue moon—the second full moon in a month.

The new year dawned chilly, but brilliant sunshine brought the temperature into the 60s by the time the parade got under way.

It was peaceful overnight along the route, except for some minor skirmishes. Police spokeswoman Janet Pope-Givens said 37 people had been arrested, mostly for disorderly conduct and public drunkenness.

Jessica Mota, 19, of Pasadena claimed prime parade-watching real estate for about 30 of her friends and relatives. She said she’s been coming to see the parade since she was 10.

“My little cousins were bouncing around all night, and now they’re passed out,” she said, pointing to some huddled bodies beneath a sleeping bag.

Among the army of volunteers who help stage the parade, students from Pasadena City College and Marantha High School in Pasadena had possibly the dirtiest job.

Armed with shovels, overalls and rolling plastic trash cans, they cleaned up after horses in the procession.

Annie Sommers, a 16-year-old softball player, declared her white coveralls “hopelessly ugly” but accessorized with a plastic flower in her hair, rose earrings and a scarf.

Despite the work, Sommers said she was happy to participate in the world-famous parade.

“I’ll try out for rose queen next year,” she joked.

The selection of Sullenberger as grand marshal was a change from the crowd-pleasing show biz types who’ve led the parade in recent years. Last year, “Dancing With the Stars” favorite and 1970s sitcom star Cloris Leachman was grand marshal. The year before, it was celebu-chef Emerile Lagasse.

Sullenberger was chosen to embody the theme of the 2010 parade, “A Cut Above the Rest.”

No one could disagree that he fit the bill perfectly, parade-goer Jessica Osterman said.

“It’s good that they’re going back to the roots and picking an average person,” said Osterman, 28. “Especially these days, with the recent terrorism attempt, we need a little patriotism. He’s someone we can all agree on.”

Over the decades, the grand marshal honor has gone to singers, astronauts, athletes, military men and politicians.

In the early years, parade organizers looked to the film industry in nearby Hollywood for big names to lead the procession. Silent film star and studio founder Mary Pickford lead the parade in 1933. Since then, only 10 women have held the title.

Chief Justice Earl Warren, entertainer Bob Hope and Richard Nixon (before he became president) each led the parade twice, while Shirley Temple did it three times in 1939, 1989 and 1999.

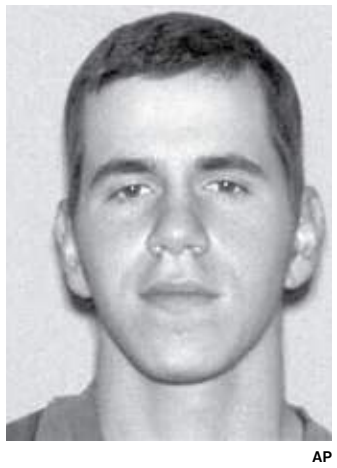
Police: Bank rob suspect was on ‘Deadliest Catch’

EUGENE, Ore. (AP)—Police say a man who appeared in the Discovery Channel show “Deadliest Catch” is wanted for three bank robberies in Oregon and has been arrested in Illinois.

Police in East Peoria, Ill., say they arrested 23-year-old Joshua Tel Warner early Thursday on the Oregon bank robbery warrant after a vehicle he was riding in was pulled over for a routine traffic stop. He was being held on $30,000 bail in the Tazewell County Jail.

Police in Eugene, Ore., say he is the same Josh Warner who appeared as a greenhorn deckhand on the king crab fishing boat Wizard in the “Deadliest Catch” earlier this year. The television reality show depicts the crab fishing industry in the treacherous Bering Sea near Alaska.

The warrant charges Warner with one bank robbery in 2007 and two in 2009.



AP
Joshua Tel Warner, 23, is shown in a driver’s license photo provided Dec. 31, 2009 by police in Eugene, Ore.

FIRST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In loving memory of

Susana Camacho Muna Masga

We would like to invite all relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of our beloved mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

Daily Mass will be offered at Saint Jude Church commencing:

Friday, January 1, 2010	8:00 a.m.
Saturday, January 2, 2010	7:00 a.m.
Sunday, January 3, 2010	8:00 a.m.
Monday, January 4, 2010	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 5, 2010	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 6, 2010	6:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 7, 2010	6:00 p.m.
Friday, January 8, 2010	6:00 p.m.

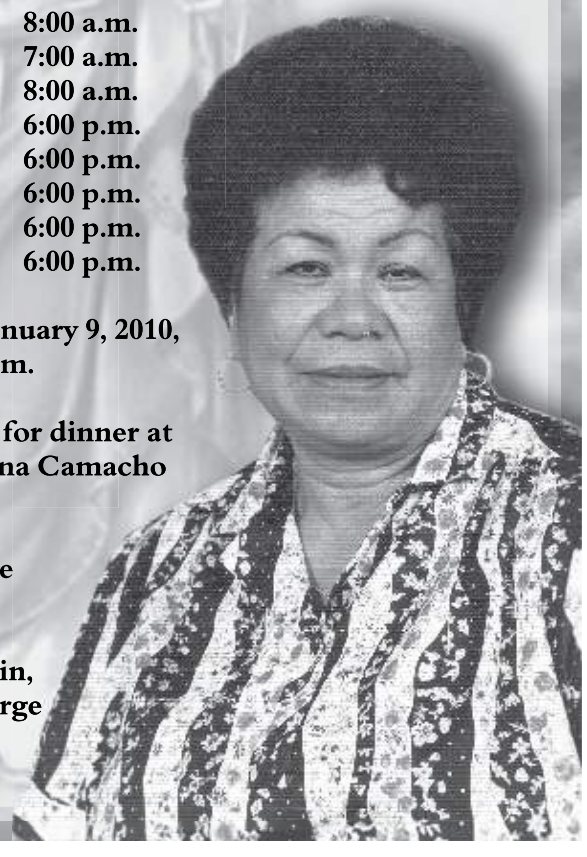
On the final day, Saturday, January 9, 2010, Mass will be offered at 6:00 p.m.

After the mass, please join us for dinner at the residence of the late Susana Camacho Muna Masga in Asperdido.

Your presence and prayers are greatly appreciated.

From: Cil, Tony, Oscar, Melvin, Diego, Maggie, Diane, & George

The Masga Family



Limbaugh: Tests show no ailments after chest pain

HONOLULU (AP)—Conservative talk radio show host Rush Limbaugh said Friday tests showed nothing was wrong with his heart after he was hospitalized with chest pains.

Limbaugh, 58, was released from The Queen's Medical Center two days after he was rushed there during a vacation. Doctors said he did not have a heart attack or heart disease.

"The pain was real, and they don't know what caused it," Limbaugh said, adding his best guess was he had a spasm in an artery.

Limbaugh said he was not taking painkillers.

In 2003, he acknowledged an addiction to painkillers for severe back pain and took a five-week leave from his radio show to enter rehab.

Limbaugh couldn't resist a few political comments during his short news conference at the Honolulu hospital.

One appeared to be aimed at health care reform, when he said he got the best health treatment in the world "right here in the United States of America."

"I don't think there's one thing wrong with the American health care system," Limbaugh said. "I got no special treatment other than what anybody else that would have called 911 and had been brought in with the same kinds of symptoms."

Caller after caller to his show Thursday sent get-well wishes. Friday's show was a "Best of Rush" special.

In a poll last month, Americans called Limbaugh the nation's most influential conservative voice. More than 14 million people listen to his show at least once a week, making him the nation's highest-rated broadcaster.

Limbaugh called his health scare a "blessing in disguise."

"It takes things like this in life maybe to prepare you for the eventuality that you are getting older, you're not as young as you were, and not as invincible as you once thought you were," he said.

Limbaugh said when he first felt the chest pain, he walked around, sat down then quickly called for help. He was in the hospital within 20 minutes.

Dr. Joana Magno, a cardiologist who treated Limbaugh at the hospital, urged people to call for help immediately if they think they have a heart problem.

"Time is very, very important, and the sooner you can get to the medical care for your heart, the sooner we know what the problems are and the sooner we can treat it," Magno said.

AP

Conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh speaks during a news conference at The Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, Friday, Jan. 1, 2010.

Van Morrison: Birth report 'utter fiction'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Reclusive Irish singer Van Morrison said Thursday that a computer hacker planted a false report on his Web site claiming he had fathered a fourth child at the age of 64 with a new partner.

The false report was disseminated Monday by a Los Angeles-based publicist for Morrison, Phil Lobel. The publicist was quoted by an unidentified associate on Thursday as getting the report from the Morrison site.

The false report was picked up by several news agencies, including The Associated Press, as well as celebrity sites and British newspapers. The false report on the Morrison Web site claimed that a woman identified as Gigi had just borne a son with Morrison.

The singer issued a statement Thursday through an international public-relations agency stressing that the report was completely false and the malicious product of a hacker's attack on his official Web site, http://www.vanmorrison.com .

It appeared to be the latest in a rapidly growing string of hoaxes in the Internet age. Digital tricksters increasingly place phony footage, facts and press releases on Web sites and video-sharing sites to see how quickly the falsehoods will spread through traditional and new media alike.

John Saunders, president of the European arm of the U.S. public-relations firm Fleishman-Hillard Inc., said he contacted Morrison and his wife, Michelle, after seeing the reports and finding them hard to believe. He said the couple wasn't aware of them and initially didn't want to respond.

AP

This Monday, Oct. 26, 2009 picture shows recording artist Van Morrison in New York.

"The reports were complete and utter fiction. None of it was true," Saunders said in a telephone interview. "But Van generally doesn't feel the need to engage with the media, whether the news is good, bad or indifferent. Michelle and Van studiously stay out of the limelight. They wouldn't have been aware of the traction these false reports were getting globally."

Saunders, a longtime friend of the couple, said he persuaded them to make a statement following several calls, texts and e-mails.

Lobel, a longtime Los Angeles publicist who cites scores of entertainment and corporate clients—including Morrison—on his company Web site, claimed in an e-mail Monday that Morrison had asked him to disseminate the birth announcement. Before sending its story on Monday, the AP called Lobel to make sure the e-mail was genuine, which Lobel confirmed.

Following Morrison's denial of the report on Thursday, repeated phone calls and e-mails from the AP to Lobel went unanswered.

Finally, a reporter visited the West Hollywood offices of his PR company, Lobeline Communications. A man who looks similar to Lobel answered the door and identified himself as a guest visiting from out of town. The man said he would check to see if Lobel was available, then reported that the publicist was on a plane.

Minutes later, a person claiming to be an associate of Lobel's sent an e-mail message from the publicist's account to the reporter, saying that Lobel "called us from his plane" to issue a statement acknowledging that his office had "passed along information from the official Web site of Van Morrison, which we are now told had been hacked."

"All those with Van Morrison regret any confusion this may have caused," the statement said.

The associate who sent the statement refused to identify himself.

Lobel eventually returned a call to the AP confirming the unidentified associate was speaking on his behalf, but the publicist declined to elaborate on the matter.

Morrison's Web site is being redesigned following the Dec. 28 hacking, the second to hit the site since October. Visitors to the site Thursday were invited to register for an e-mail news service but could not browse its contents.

In his prepared statement, Morrison said he remains "very happily married" to Michelle Morrison, his partner since 1992 and mother of their two children aged 3 and 2.

"Once the claims were brought to our attention, they were taken down from the site but not before news organizations repeated these falsehoods," his statement said. "The comments which appeared on my Web site did not come from me. They are completely and utterly without foundation."

Saunders said Morrison wouldn't talk to the media directly and was celebrating the new year with his wife and children. "He has never done interviews about his personal life. Van's been consistent on that," he said.

Morrison's previous marriage, which ended in divorce in 1973, produced one daughter, the Californian singer-songwriter Shana Morrison. She performs occasionally with her father.

'You Light Up My Life' songwriter settles lawsuit

NEW YORK (AP)—The Academy Award-winning songwriter of "You Light Up My Life" has ended his six-figure fight with a former fiancee he accused of conning him out of cash and pricey gifts by hiding the fact that she was already married.

A Manhattan judge last week approved a settlement between composer Joseph Brooks and Joaly Gomez, who said Brooks knew she wasn't single.

The settlement terms weren't specified, but court records show Brooks previously agreed Gomez could keep most of a disputed $550,000 unless they struck a deal to share it.

Brooks, 71, sued his 23-year-old ex-fiancee in October, seeking at least $2 million in damages and the return of the money, a $60,000 engagement ring, a $70,000 Mercedes-Benz and other presents. Gomez was a "young schemer" who "tried to sucker a 'sugar daddy,'" Brooks' lawyer, William Rome, said in court papers.

Brooks said he learned Gomez wasn't single only when he spotted a marriage certificate in her handbag in October, 18 months into their relationship.

But Gomez said in court papers that Brooks knew all along about her marriage. He even steered her to a lawyer in June to arrange her divorce, she said.

Throughout their relationship, "there were no secrets as to each party's obvious agenda," wrote Gomez's lawyer, Rosemarie Arnold. Brooks met Gomez in October 2007 by placing an ad looking for "pretty girls" for "companionship" and initially paid her $1,000 an hour for it, Arnold wrote.

She said that as the relationship progressed, he gave Gomez $1 million as a gift—but then borrowed $500,000 of it to help him make bail after he was charged in June with a series of casting-couch rapes.

Brooks has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial on rape, sexual abuse and other charges. He's accused of sexually assaulting 11 women who came to his Manhattan apartment to audition for supposed movie roles.

He promised Gomez he would return the money but didn't, Arnold wrote.

Arnold declined to comment Friday. Rome didn't immediately respond to telephone and e-mail messages.

Brooks won the Oscar for best original song for the Debby Boone ballad "You Light Up My Life." He also wrote and directed the 1977 romantic comedy of the same name. It concerns a comedian who dreams of being an actress and has a one-night stand with a director.

Kathy Griffin makes another vulgar quip on CNN

In this Sunday, Sept. 20, 2009 picture, Kathy Griffin arrives at the 61st Primetime Emmy Awards in Los Angeles.

AP

NEW YORK (AP)—For the second straight year, comedian Kathy Griffin ushered in the new year by saying something vulgar on CNN.

During the network's live New Year's Eve broadcast from Times Square, Griffin was joking with co-host Anderson Cooper about how to pronounce the first name of "balloon boy" Falcon Heene when she mumbled something that sounded a little like "Falcon" and a lot like the F-word.

Cooper hung his head, shook it and said "You're terrible," before resuming his banter.

The network said in a statement Friday that it "regrets that profanity was used during our New Year's Eve coverage."

During the same show a year ago, Griffin gleefully shouted at a heckler in the crowd and made a joke implying that the man performed gay sex acts for a living.

In a statement released by her publicist Friday, Griffin made light of the "balloon boy" joke: "Like every other serious reporter covering the now infamous balloon boy hoax, I struggled to pronounce his name 'Falcon' correctly and have gotten a kick out of how many ways I've heard it pronounced by other serious reporters. Just add me to that list and happy new year!"

Asked whether Griffin would be invited back next year, CNN spokeswoman Shimrit Sheetrit said planning for the 2011 celebration hadn't yet begun.

Elton John says he's helping Eminem fight drugs

Rapper Eminem performs at a concert celebrating the launch of the video game "DJ Hero" in Los Angeles on in this June 1, 2009 file photo.

AP

LONDON (AP)—Elton John says he has been helping American rapper Eminen fight drug problems for more than a year.

John says Eminem is succeeding in his well-publicized battle against substance abuse.

John told BBC Radio Saturday that as a recovered drug abuser he is happy to help people if they want the assistance but drugs make people so cocky and arrogant that they often reject help.

Eminem has written about his substance abuse problems in the past.

Shania Twain carries Olympic torch

TIMMINS, Ontario (AP)—Shania Twain carried the Olympic torch the final 400 yards into Hollinger Park, cheered on by thousands of parka-clad fans who turned out in arctic conditions to see the hometown hero in person Friday night.

After making her final turn toward the stage, Twain paused, held the torch aloft in her mittened left hand, and waved to the crowd. The country star then bounded the final few yards onto the stage, where she lit the Olympic cauldron.

"I feel proud, very proud," Twain said. "It's a highlight of my life to be able to carry the flame, to light the cauldron."

At 16 degrees below zero and windy, it was so cold that when a dozen red beach balls were tossed into the crowd, the balls came apart within seconds.

AP

Canadian country music sensation Shania Twain lights the Olympic Cauldron with the Olympic Flame at Hollinger Park in her hometown of Timmins, Ontario on Friday, Jan. 1, 2010.

"I know that sounds crazy, but it wouldn't be Timmins if it wasn't 40 below with the wind chill factor!" Twain said.

AP

In this undated photo provided by Henry County Jail, Demetrius Lee Stewart is seen. Stewart, a music producer known as Shawty Redd, is being held in a suburban Atlanta jail on a murder charge.

Rap producer Shawty Redd charged with murder

McDONOUGH, Ga. (AP)—Music producer Demetrius Lee Stewart, known as Shawty Redd, is being held in a suburban Atlanta jail on a murder charge.

Henry County Police Capt. Jason Bolton says Stewart was arrested Friday morning.

Stewart is accused of shooting 35-year-old Damon A. Martin of Detroit in an argument at Stewart's home in Hampton, about 30 miles southeast of Atlanta.

The 28-year-old Stewart is charged with murder and was being held without bond in the Henry County jail Saturday. His first court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 12. Police didn't know whether Stewart has a lawyer.

Stewart has worked with Young Jeezy, Snoop Dogg and other major artists.

Siblings drifting apart must come together for mother

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My problem is the relationship I have with my brother. We're both in our 40s and married. Over the last few years our relationship has deteriorated.

We live in different states, and I see him once a year when I visit Mom. I call him in between, but he never returns my calls. When we do get together, he makes it clear that he'd rather be somewhere else. It makes me sad because we have a small family and I'd like to be closer—like we were in the past.

Mom is in her 80s and lives alone in the house we grew up in. She has lived by herself for more than 20 years. Although she's very active, the house has become a burden. She and I have talked about selling it and her moving to a senior residence close to me. She is thrilled with the idea.

I am afraid my brother will make a fuss and try to discourage the process, since Mom would be moving out of state. I'll be going to visit Mom soon to help with some jobs around the house. How do I get through to my brother that this would be a progressive move for Mom?

SENSIBLE SIBLING IN MINNESOTA

DEAR SENSIBLE SIB: You're behaving as if the decision is yours and your brother's to make. If your mother is "thrilled" with the idea of being closer to you, it's possible that your brother and his wife are less involved in her life than you think. When you go to visit and your brother comes by acting as if he'd rather be elsewhere, start a family discussion on the subject and don't let him hijack it. Your mother's wishes should prevail.

P.S. I don't know whether you and your brother will be able to re-establish the closeness you once had or the reason you drifted apart. But a mediator might be able to help if you both are willing.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 22-year-old married woman in Canada. I moved from the United States to be with my husband when I was 19. People seem to react negatively because we married at such a young age. I am often asked, "What do your parents think about that?"

Abby, my mother died when I was 17 and I have had little contact with my father since I was 12 because he was abusive. I was fortunate that my grandmother took me in. She loves my husband and has no problem with my marriage as she knows I am wise beyond my years because of my past.

How can I respond to these strangers—first about their negative reaction to my having married so young, and second, to their questions about my parents? I don't like telling strangers about my mother's passing away because it is still painful after all these years.

NO PARENTS IN CALGARY

DEAR NO PARENTS: Ah, the thoughtless questions people come up with about things that are none of their business! You do not have to give a stranger chapter and verse about your family history. Just smile, say, "I was raised by my grandmother, and she didn't have a problem with it," then change the subject immediately by asking the person a question about her- or himself.

DEAR ABBY: When riding in a car, who gets to select the radio station? Is it the driver/owner of the vehicle or the passenger?

LIKES TO LISTEN IN FRESNO, CALIF.

DEAR LIKES TO LISTEN: Usually it's the driver or owner. However, if you would like to listen to a station other than the one that's on, politely ask if you can change the station and the driver/owner may accommodate you.

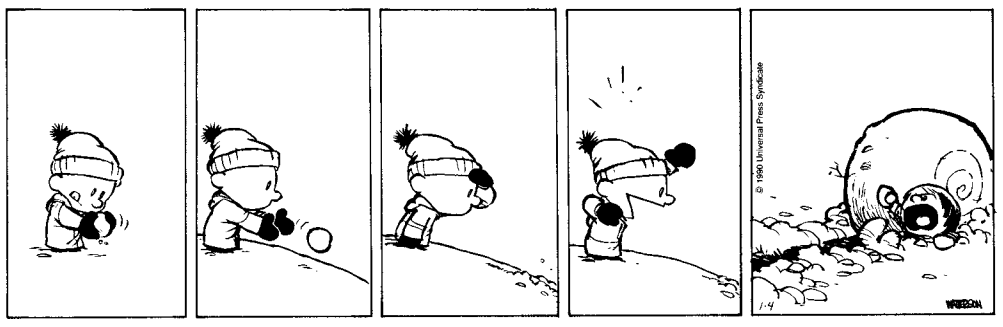
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

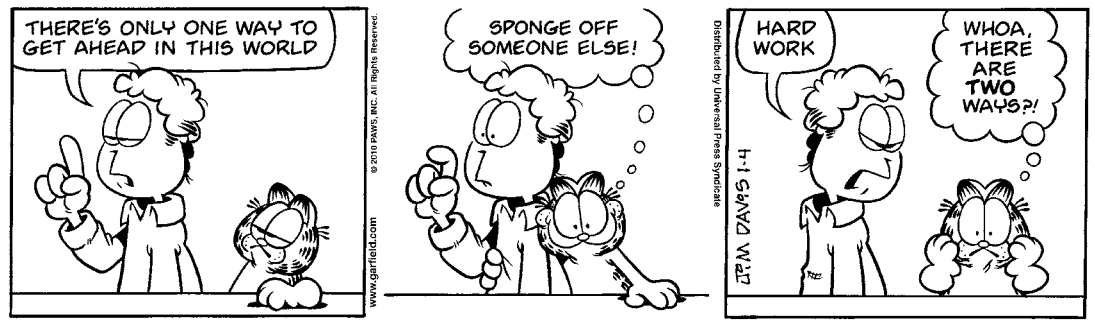
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis


THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO GET AHEAD IN THIS WORLD
SPONGE OFF SOMEONE ELSE!
HARD WORK
WHOA, THERE ARE TWO WAYS?!
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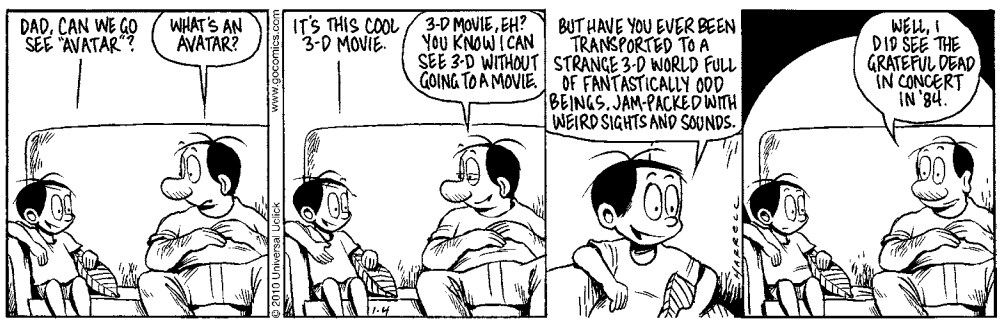
JIM DAVIS 1-4

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD, CAN WE GO SEE "AVATAR"?
WHAT'S AN AVATAR?
IT'S THIS COOL 3-D MOVIE.
3-D MOVIE, EH? YOU KNOW I CAN SEE 3-D WITHOUT GOING TO A MOVIE.
BUT HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TRANSPORTED TO A STRANGE 3-D WORLD FULL OF FANTASTICALLY ODD BEINGS, JAM-PACKED WITH WEIRD SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.
WELL, I DID SEE THE GRATEFUL DEAD IN CONCERT IN '84.
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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW.
I SUDDENLY GOT THIS URGE TO GO JOG A COUPLE MILES.
SO I THOUGHT I'D BETTER LIE DOWN 'TIL THE FEELING PASSED.
www.gocomics.com
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

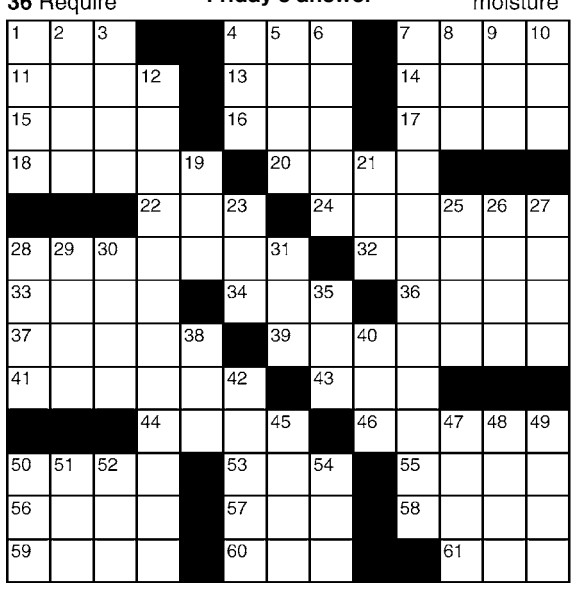
ACROSS
1 Peculiar
4 Bikini half
7 Poet Angelou
11 Satirical comic Sahl
13 "— the ramparts ..."
14 Mid-month date
15 Celebrity
16 Witty one
17 Last year's frosh
18 Skewered entree
20 Mineral hardness scale name
22 Apprehend
24 Toy (with)
28 Sheriff
32 Did a cobbler's job
33 Composer Khachaturian
34 Catch some rays
36 Require
37 Stiff
39 Lustrous, in a way
41 Meryl Streep's alma mater
43 Hawaiian garland
44 Overly confident
46 Fake drake
50 New Zealand bird
53 Bow the head
55 Coffee
56 Reverberate
57 Raw rock
58 Mideast sultanate
59 Night light?
60 Fresh
61 Wapiti

DOWN
1 Siberian city
2 Be too fond
3 Colorless
4 Violinist's need
5 Paper quantity
6 Shop talk
7 City in Orange County, Calif.
8 Commotion
9 "Uh-huh"
10 Blond shade
12 Message
19 "Humbug!"
21 Storefront sign abbr.
23 Cudgel
25 Run off
26 Ogler's look
27 Vortex
28 Sportscaster Albert
29 Met melody
30 "Before," in an Alger story
31 — Vegas
35 Zero
38 Weir
40 Started
42 Talk nonstop
45 Former veep
47 Arrived
48 Elliptical
49 Tug hard
50 Trivia maven Jennings
51 Lemieux milieu
52 Which person
54 Morning moisture

Solution time: 24 mins.

S	I	M	O	N	■	K	O	D	■	A	S	P
A	R	O	M	A	■	O	D	E	■	R	I	O
T	E	N	E	T	■	M	O	N	G	R	E	L
■	■	A	N	C	H	O	R	■	R	O	V	E
A	P	R	■	H	O	D	■	S	E	W	E	D
L	O	C	H	■	M	O	N	E	T	■	■	■
A	W	H	I	L	E	■	I	C	E	M	A	N
■	■	■	N	O	R	S	E	■	L	O	G	E
T	A	N	G	O	■	E	L	F	■	N	O	W
O	B	O	E	■	G	A	S	J	E	T	■	■
M	O	N	S	O	O	N	■	O	S	A	K	A
E	V	E	■	A	R	C	■	R	A	N	I	N
S	E	T	■	R	Y	E	■	D	U	A	D	S

Friday's answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Michael Stipe, 50; Matt Frewer, 52; Patty Loveless, 53; Dyan Cannon, 73

Happy Birthday: Get serious about what's important to you. Let everyone around you know exactly how you feel and what you expect. Call in the favors owed to you by all those you have helped in the past. You can stabilize your life and your future this year if you set reasonable goals and work diligently to accomplish what you set out to do. Your numbers are 3, 12, 14, 21, 24, 27, 42

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Making a move too soon or to the wrong place will be difficult to rectify. You have to realize your limitations and not give in to persuasive individuals eager to take advantage of a situation that could potentially lead to a loss. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't fret over things you cannot change. Make them work to your advantage. The networking you do now will lead to greater knowledge and the possibility of checking out new locations and avenues. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Put more thought into investments. You can stabilize your position if you are frugal and conservative. Be careful not to let social invitations lead to costly emotional problems. Added responsibilities due to older or younger people will likely cause setbacks to your own plans. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You can make changes that significantly improve your life and keep you moving in a direction that brings friends and family closer together. An added burden will turn out to be resourceful as time goes by. Your love life will improve if you have a heart-to-heart talk. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't take anything for granted or think that you can slack off when it comes to work. It's vital that you put everything you have into what you do so you aren't seen as expendable. Not everyone will be honest with you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You may be emotional but, if you speak from the heart, you will strike a chord in someone who has the potential to help you. Love is on the rise and a romantic plan will pay off. Welcome change. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Think twice before you say or do anything that might upset your personal life. Not everyone will be on the same page as you this year. Focus on children and creative endeavors. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): A move or change of scenery will rejuvenate you and will enhance your financial, emotional and physical options. Don't let someone else take control. It's important to find your own way and create a space conducive to your advancement. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Unexpected problems will surface if you haven't been honest about your whereabouts or intentions. Be upfront about the way you feel, especially with people from your past with whom you are reacquainting yourself. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Secure your financial future and you will feel better about the changes you want to make. There is plenty to consider regarding a lifestyle change that can help alleviate your stress and improve your relationships. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): The less information people have, the less interference you'll experience. Be creative in the way you handle the people you love. Lay down ground rules to follow in order to reach your intended destination. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Focus on what you can do for others and you will get all the help you need in return. A partnership with someone from your past will be possible. Don't be too proud or stubborn to admit mistakes that were made. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are articulate and dependable. You have courage and work to achieve your goals. You are independent and have integrity.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3	5			8			2
		9	3		6			7
			4			1	8	
		1		5				
5			8		3			1
				6		4		
	7	4			2			
3			1		9	6		
2			5			3	7	

Difficulty Level ★ 1/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's SUDOKU Answer

4	2	9	1	8	6	3	5	7
3	1	6	2	5	7	9	8	4
8	5	7	4	9	3	1	2	6
2	7	8	6	1	4	5	9	3
6	4	1	9	3	5	8	7	2
5	9	3	8	7	2	4	6	1
7	8	4	3	2	9	6	1	5
9	6	5	7	4	1	2	3	8
1	3	2	5	6	8	7	4	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/01

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WEEKEND GETAWAYS **Solution: 7 letters**

C	L	S	I	N	G	L	E	S	P	R	A	M	P	A
D	N	A	S	R	U	O	T	A	E	A	C	A	R	S
S	V	O	T	R	I	P	M	C	F	N	C	P	I	V
N	A	C	I	N	D	P	R	F	S	O	O	S	C	A
O	C	A	(S)	T	E	E	O	E	E	I	M	H	E	L
I	A	S	(N)	R	A	R	I	D	T	T	M	O	M	U
T	T	I	(N)	T	D	T	N	M	A	A	O	P	I	E
C	I	N	(I)	A	I	A	R	W	R	N	D	P	T	R
A	O	O	B	V	L	E	O	O	O	I	A	I	E	U
R	N	L	I	S	L	G	O	P	P	T	T	N	L	S
T	E	T	I	A	P	D	M	I	A	S	E	G	A	A
T	C	S	X	O	N	O	O	M	Y	E	N	O	H	E
A	N	C	O	U	P	L	E	S	R	D	H	A	C	L
O	F	F	E	R	S	S	P	A	S	A	G	C	R	P
L	E	V	A	R	T	B	R	E	A	K	F	A	S	T

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Last Saturday's Answer: Olives

To order THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 or 29, send $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Uclick plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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JVA No. 10-005
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There's nothing Super about the Pittsburgh Steelers anymore.
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Tribu
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TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2009
Fitial eyes Cepeda's re-appointment to NM
DPH to ask for extension of emergency de
$1.35M earmarks for NMI now up fo
By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER
The fate of the $1.35 million in CNMI special projects funding requested by Del-
egate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) now rests with President Obama, after the conference report on the omnibus Fiscal Year 2010 spending bill cleared the U.S. Senate on Sunday.
Sablan's request fo
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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DONALDD BUFTON, Plaintiff, -v- **SAMUEL RAYBURN,** Defendant.] CIVIL ACTION NO. 04-0043

SIXTH AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to a Writ of Execution issued by the Court in this matter on October 12, 2007, I will set, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and the to following property:

1. Lot No 012 B 08, situated in Calabera, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing 39,297 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 012 B 01, which was registered with the Land Registry as Document No. 1466 on the 15th of March, 1972.

2. Tract 22609(formerly H-65), situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an are of 10,845 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2165/74, the original of which was registered June 15, 1976 as Land Registry Document No. 5272.

3. Tract 22610 (formerly H-65 A), situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 13,558 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No.2164/74, the original of which was registered June 15, 1976 as Land Registry Document No. 5272.

4. Lot E.A. 579, situated in Laulau, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 10,056 square meters, more or less, being situated in Land Square Seven, Section R, Units u and v, and Land Square Ten, Section 1, Units a and b, as shown on APWO Drawings No. 11411 and 11414 on file with the Clerk of Courts (being all that property conveyed by that Grant of Public Domain from the Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to Joaquin I. Pangelinan executed April 18, 1956 and filed April 25, 1956 at the Clerk of Courts).

5. Tract/Lot No.H-378, situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 27,537 square meters, more or less, as shown on Division of Lands & Surveys Official survey plat no. 2136/89 dated August 10, 1989, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 89-2641, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

6. Tract/Lot No. H-378 "A", situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 1,585 square meters, more or less, as shown on Division of Lands & Surveys Official survey plat no. 2136/89 dated August 10, 1989, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 89-2641, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

7. Lot 001 C 10, situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 9,999 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 001 C 01, the original of which was recorded with the Commonwealth Recorder on March 20, 1980, as Document No. 9811.

8. Lot 001 C 16 (part of original Lot 001 C 06), situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 14,579 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 001 C 04, the original of which was recorded with the Commonwealth Recorder on June 13, 1986, as Document No. 86-1187.

9. Lot 012 J 13, Parcel "A", situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, consisting of the northern portion of Lot 012 J 13, and containing an area of 2,319 square meters, more or less.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 8, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law offices of Michael A. White, LLC. Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 8th day of December, 2009

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

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Find today's solution in this section

Spurs beat Wizards 97-86 for 5th straight win

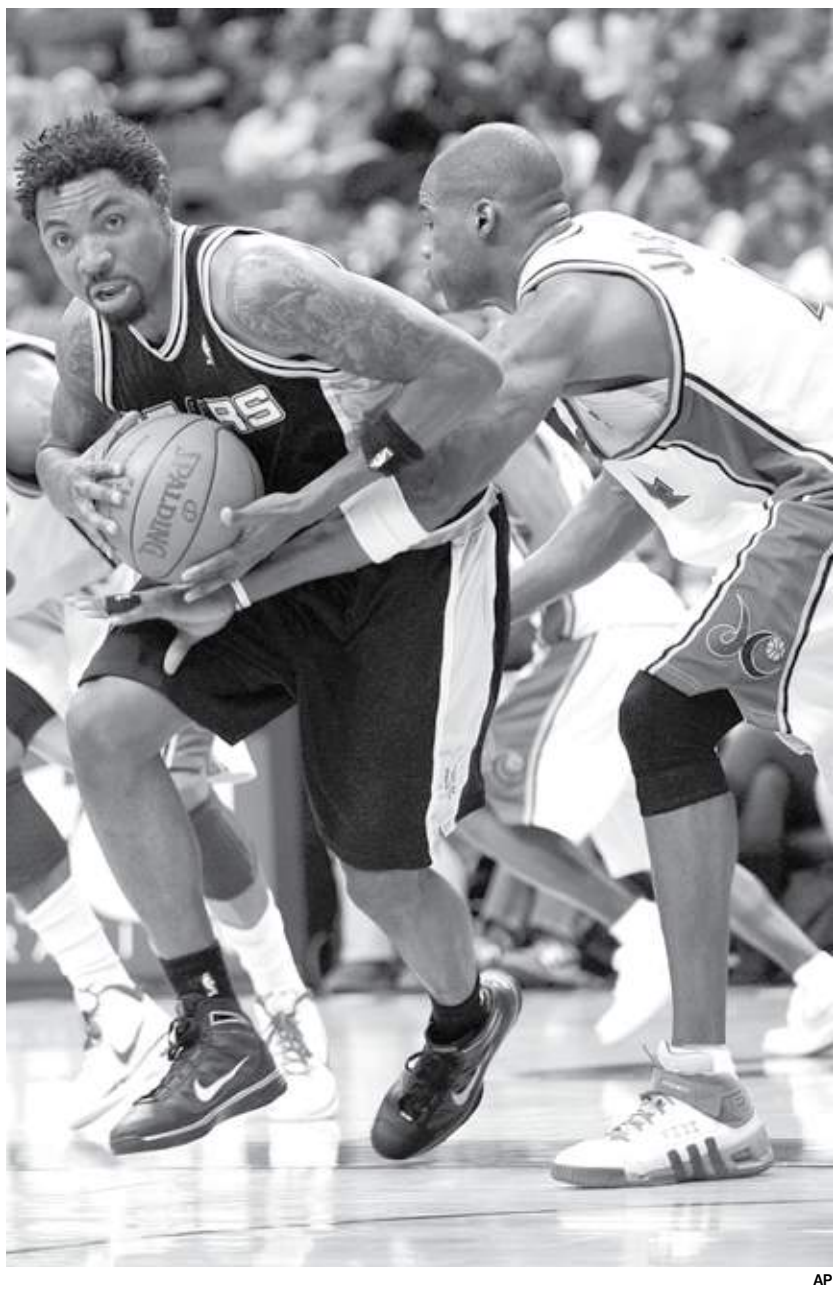
WASHINGTON (AP)—The San Antonio Spurs defeated the slumping Washington Wizards 97-86 for their season-best fifth straight NBA victory on Saturday.

Tim Duncan scored 23 points, reserve Roger Mason Jr. added a season-high 20 and Tony Parker had 12 points for the Spurs, who have won four straight on the road and nine in a row against the Wizards.

Duncan's jump-hook gave the Spurs an 81-80 lead with 6:21 left in the game, and he followed that with two free throws as part of a decisive 12-2 run.

Caron Butler scored 24 points and Gilbert Arenas added 23 for the Wizards, who have dropped four straight and remained enveloped in a gun controversy surrounding Arenas.

Arenas is being investigated by the NBA, U.S. Attorney's Office and District of Columbia police over allegations that he stored unloaded firearms in his locker in the team's Verizon Center locker room.



AP

Washington Wizards forward Antawn Jamison, right, tires to stop San Antonio Spurs guard Roger Mason, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010, in Washington.

Nuggets 105, Jazz 95

At Salt Lake, City, Ty Lawson had 23 points and nine assists and Denver ended a three-game losing streak despite playing without injured stars Carmelo Anthony and Chauncey Billups.

Nene added 22 points and Kenyon Martin finished with 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Nuggets.

Carlos Boozer had 18 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Jazz.

Cavaliers 94, Nets 86

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, LeBron James had 28 points, nine rebounds and seven assists to lead Cleveland to its seventh straight victory.

Mo Williams added 18 points for the Cavaliers, who have won 12 of 13, and Anderson Varejao had 15 points and 12 rebounds. Shaquille O'Neal finished with 12 points and nine boards.

Devin Harris scored 22 points and Brook Lopez 20 for New Jersey.

Bobcats 107, Heat 97

At Miami, Stephen Jackson scored 13 of his season-high 35 points in the fourth quarter, D.J. Augustin added all 13 of his in the final 11 minutes and Charlotte won a road game for just the second time this season.

Jackson added eight rebounds for Charlotte, which erased an early 19-point deficit.

Dwyane Wade had 29 points and 11 assists for Miami, which dropped its third straight.

Pacers 122, Timberwolves 111

At Indianapolis, Roy Hibbert and Luther Head each scored 21 points to help Indiana snap an eight-game losing streak.

Brandon Rush scored 16 points and Mike Dunleavy added 15 points and eight rebounds for the Pacers, who played without injured forwards Troy Murphy and Tyler Hansbrough.

Al Jefferson scored 23 points, Wayne Ellington had a career-high 16 and Kevin Love also scored 16 for Minnesota, which has lost four straight.

Celtics 103, Raptors 96

At Boston, Ray Allen scored 23 points, Rasheed Wallace added 16 and Boston won despite missing starters Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett and Rajon Rondo because of injuries.

Tony Allen had 14 points, seven assists and five rebounds, Glen Davis chipped in 15 points, and Kendrick Perkins had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Boston.

Chris Bosh led Toronto with 25 points and nine rebounds.

Bulls 101, Magic 93

At Chicago, Derrick Rose scored 30 points to lead five players in double figures and help Chicago to its season-high fourth straight win.

John Salmons scored 15 points, Luol Deng added 14, Taj Gibson had 10 points and 12 rebounds and Kirk Hinrich scored 11 points for the Bulls.

Matt Barnes had 23 points but Dwight Howard managed just nine points for Orlando.

Hornets 99, Rockets 95

At New Orleans, Chris Paul had 28 points and nine assists and New Orleans closed the win on a 13-2 run.

Emeka Okafor had 14 points and 16 rebounds, and David West added 14 points, including a jumper that gave the Hornets the lead for good with 47.6 seconds left after they trailed by seven late in the fouth quarter.

Trevor Ariza scored 19 points and Aaron Brooks had 17 for Houston.

Grizzlies 128, Suns 103

At Phoenix, O.J. Mayo had 25 points and reserve Sam Young added a career-high 22 to help Memphis to its most lopsided victory of the season.

Marc Gasol scored 19 points for the Grizzlies, Zach Randolph had 18 points and 11 rebounds, Rudy Gay scored 16 points, and rookie Hasheem Thabeet had 10.

Amare Stoudemire led the Suns with 29 points, Steve Nash had 19 points and 13 assists, Lou Amundson had 14 points and Goran Dragic added 13.

Bucks 103, Thunder 97, OT

At Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored six of his 27 points in overtime to help Milwaukee snap a four-game losing streak.

Andrew Bogut had 23 points and 15 rebounds for the Bucks, who ended Oklahoma City's win streak at five games.

Kevin Durant had 31 points and Russell Westbrook had 17 points and 13 assists for the Thunder.

Mavericks 99, Kings 91

At Sacramento, California, Dirk Nowitzki scored 25 points to help Dallas improve to a Western Conference-best 12-5 on the road.

Jose Barea scored 17 points and Josh Howard added 16 points for the Mavericks.

Omri Casspie scored 22 points for the Kings, who have dropped five of six.

Trail Blazers 105, Warriors 89

At Portland, Oregon, Brandon Roy scored 37 points and Andre Miller added 23 as Portland won despite dressing only eight players.

Martell Webster had 21 points and 11 rebounds for injury-plagued Portland, which essentially used six players. Rookie forward Jeff Pendergraph started but played just 9 minutes.

Monta Ellis scored 30 points and Corey Maggette added 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Warriors.

Arenas takes responsibility for 'bad judgment'

WASHINGTON (AP)—Gilbert Arenas admits he used "bad judgment" in bringing guns into the Washington Wizards locker room. He also denied on Saturday that he gambles and said there are misconceptions in the various stories about a dispute between himself and teammate Javaris Crittenton.

As for the rest, he said he'll tell it to authorities on Monday.

Arenas spoke following the 97-86 loss to the San Antonio Spurs. His remarks came after two days of reports about the investigation into the guns he kept at the Verizon Center—and about an hour after the family of late Wizards owner Abe Pollin said it was "extremely poor judgment" that the guns were there in the first place.

"I agree," Arenas said. "That's bad judgment on my part to store them in here, and I take responsibility for that."

Arenas skirted other questions about the matter. Two officials within the league who have been briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press on Saturday that it involves a dispute over card-playing gambling debts and a heated discussion in the locker room. Neither official was told of Arenas and Crittenton actually drawing guns on each other—as the *New York Post* has reported.

Both officials spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Asked about guns being drawn, Arenas said: "I can't speak on that. But if you know me, you've been here, I've never did anything (involving) violence. Anything I do is funny— well, it's funny to me."

Asked if the accounts of what happened have been blown out of proportion, Arenas laughed and said: "A little."

"I give money away for free," he said. "I think if I owed someone some money, I think I'd pay it up. I play poker on my phone or my computer. If I lose, I just reset the game. I don't gamble. I don't do anything like that."

Arenas said he was "not nervous at all" about the possible outcome of the investigation, but the implications are serious. What began with the NBA looking into a possible violation of its own rules has turned into a matter involving the U.S. Attorney's Office and District of Columbia police. The legal system, the league and the Wizards could take action if the allegations prove true.

Asked if he had met with law enforcement officials, Arenas said: "I deal with that on Monday. ... I've got to put it in their hands and tell the story and see what they say."

Arenas again stressed that he's "a jokester" and that nothing in his life was actually serious. Many of the comments he has made on the matter have been lighthearted.

"I'm a goof ball and that's what I am, so even doing something like this, I'm going to make fun of it and that's how I am," Arenas said. "Some people say I'm not taking it serious, but why be depressed at home when I can just make myself laugh?"

Crittenton has not played this season because of a foot injury and was not immediately available to reporters in the locker room after Saturday's game.

"We were friends before; we're friends now," Arenas said. "We don't have no problem."

Pollin died in November, and his family was running the team during the transition to a new ownership group. The late owner had little tolerance for player misbehavior, and he changed the team's name from Bullets in the 1990s because of the violent connotation.

"The fact that guns were brought to the Verizon Center is dangerous and disappointing and showed extremely poor judgment," the family's statement said. "Guns have absolutely no place in a workplace environment and we will take further steps to ensure this never happens again."

The Wizards said on Christmas Eve that Arenas stored unloaded firearms in a locked container in his locker, with no ammunition. Arenas said he wanted them out of the house after the birth of his latest child.

One of the officials who spoke to the AP offered further details on Saturday. The official said the dispute between Arenas and Crittenton began during a card game on the team's flight home from a West Coast road trip on Dec. 19, and the players continued their dispute in the locker room when the team practiced on Dec. 21.

The nation's capital has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation, and the NBA's collective bargaining agreement prohibits players from possessing firearms at league facilities or when traveling on any league business. Commissioner David Stern has said players should leave their guns at home and could levy substantial fines or suspensions, pending the outcome of the investigation.

Depending on the severity of the findings, the Wizards could invoke the morals clause found in standard NBA player contracts and attempt to void the remainder of the six-year, $111 million deal Arenas signed in the summer of 2008.

Such an option might be tempting because the Wizards have yet to get much of a return on the investment. Arenas missed all but two games last season as he recuperated from knee operations, and has struggled to adjust to new coach Flip Saunders' offense this season.

Arenas played on Saturday despite a sore left knee. He finished with 23 points and eight assists as the Wizards lost their fourth in a row to drop to a 10-21 record.

"My concern is only on the basketball court right now," Arenas said. "We're not performing the way we should."

McDaniels benches star receiver for season finale

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—Just when they finally patched things up, Brandon Marshall and Josh McDaniels are back to square one, and another reconciliation appears farfetched.

McDaniels announced Friday he's benching Marshall, his Pro Bowl wide receiver, for the team's pivotal season finale against Kansas City on Sunday.

"Our word for the week has been accountability. And we're looking to put the 45 guys on the field on Sunday that want to play together, want to help us try to win and qualify for the playoffs," McDaniels said. "... And anybody that showed any indifference to that, we'll play without them.

Marshall suggested he couldn't have played anyway after pulling his right hamstring at practice this week.

In an extraordinary half-hour at Dove Valley, McDaniels insinuated on the podium that Marshall was exaggerating the extent of his injury and was unaccountable to the team. The Pro Bowl receiver responded from his locker by noting McDaniels never played in the NFL and hinting he might be getting called out by his coach because the Broncos' season is unraveling.

Since a sizzling 6-0 start, the Broncos have gone 2-7.

They'll try to make the playoffs Sunday without their 100-catch receiver or tight end Tony Scheffler, demoted to the scout team, and maybe minus wide receiver Eddie Royal, who has a head injury.

Marshall was voted to his second straight Pro Bowl on Tuesday after becoming just the fifth wide receiver with three consecutive 100-catch seasons. He spoke Wednesday about how fulfilling it was to bounce back after a tumultuous offseason that included a rocky start to his relationship with McDaniels, who rejected trade requests and demands for a new contract. McDaniels also suspended him for nine days during training camp for insubordination at practice.

Minutes later, Marshall was clutching his right hamstring after pulling up lame on a route and hopping to the sideline.

Marshall said an MRI showed no structural damage, "but when you try to explode and take off, if you don't have it, you don't have it."

He missed Thursday's practice, and when asked if his star receiver would work out Friday, McDaniels said Marshall would be deactivated for the game and noted it was "a coaching decision," not an injury issue."

"There's a number of players that are going to play on Sunday with things that are much more difficult to deal with than what he has," McDaniels said, a phrase he repeated three times during his news conference.

"It's never going to be acceptable while I'm here and while this staff is here and while we're trying to build our staff with this philosophy. I don't know if it was acceptable before, but it isn't going to be now and it never will be. And this isn't about sending a message, it's about fielding a team that wants to go out there and win and give us the best opportunity to do that."

Co-captain Daniel Graham said that while Marshall has been a good teammate this year, McDaniels was doing what was in the team's best interests.

AP

In this Nov. 22, 2009, file photo, Denver Broncos wide receiver Brandon Marshall sits on the bench during an NFL football game against the San Diego Chargers in Denver, Colo.

Marshall said he respected his coach's decision, but couldn't play effectively with his tweaked hamstring. He also couldn't believe McDaniels was questioning his toughness.

"I don't think coach ever played in the NFL, so for my hamstring to be feeling the way it felt, it's tough for me to go out there and expect to play at a high level," Marshall said. "I've battled through a whole lot of injuries before. I played the whole year last year with a tear in my hip. So, I don't think my toughness is in question here."

Marshall also took offense to the suggestion he wasn't buying into McDaniels' program.

"I'm a guy who's been giving it up a lot for this team," said Marshall, who has 101 receptions for 1,120 yards and 10 touchdowns. "I approached this year in a professional manner and I'm going to continue to do that. If he decides to take some personal shots because of the way the season's unfolding, it's not my fault. "I've made big plays when I'm supposed to."

What about accountability?

"Well, accountability and injury is different, you know?" Marshall said. "I pulled, well, I wouldn't say I pulled my hamstring, it's definitely not that bad, but it's tough."

Marshall said he hopes he's available next week if the Broncos make the playoffs, which would make for an awkward situation given all the accusations flying around Friday.

Are the Broncos laying the groundwork for a separation? Will the sides ever be able to patch up their differences?

Marshall is in the final year of a contract that pays him $2.2 million this season. His earnings power might be limited this offseason if there's no new collective bargaining agreement, leaving him as a restricted free agent. That means the Broncos could offer only a modest raise of about $1 million—providing they want to keep him.

McDaniels said he didn't know if contractual issues were at the root of his latest dustup with Marshall, but suggested the receiver was putting selfish interests ahead of the team's.

Asked if Marshall will even be in the stadium Sunday, McDaniels said: "I don't know."

Was this the last straw?

"Anything I do moving forward is going to be in a professional manner," Marshall said. "I'm not going to get into any he said/she said like we've done in the past. I think that's childish, and like I said, I don't think there's any question about my toughness, the way I play the game. It could be first-and-10 and if I gain 15 yards, I'm still fighting for 16 yards."

Saints plan to rest Brees, start Brunell

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Drew Brees will get some rest in the New Orleans Saints' regular-season finale at Carolina, likely keeping his NFL-record completion percentage intact.

Coach Sean Payton has decided to start Mark Brunell in place of the star quarterback for Sunday's game.

If Brees doesn't play, as expected, his completion mark of 70.60 percent will break the record of 70.55 set by Ken Anderson with the Cincinnati Bengals in 1982.

Brees was aware of the record.

"When I was a rookie quarterback in San Diego, I looked up all the records," he said on Thursday. "I just wanted to know, you know? So I knew them all by heart there for a while."

Still, Brees said earlier this week that he was prepared to play on Sunday and throw as often as Payton deemed necessary, taking the same approach to maintaining his completion percentage that Ted Williams took to hitting .400.

Brees wears No. 9 in honor of Williams, the Boston Red Sox legend who raised his batting average from .400 to .406 by playing on the final day of the 1941 baseball season.

"I'm going to do whatever I'm asked to do and whatever I can to help this team," Brees said Thursday.

The Saints (13-2) already own the top seed for the NFC playoffs. With little at stake, they also decided to not play safety Darren Sharper and tight end David Thomas on Sunday.

Sharper has a minor soreness in his left knee. He was listed as questionable on Friday, but was downgraded along with Thomas, who had been listed as doubtful with a calf injury.

Brees has thrown for 4,388 yards and 34 touchdowns this season. He completed 19 straight passes during the Saints' 20-17 overtime loss to Tampa Bay last Sunday. However, four promising drives produced no points in that game because of two third-down completions that came up a yard short of a first down, Marques Colston's fourth-quarter fumble in Bucs territory and Garrett Hartley's missed 37-yard field goal, which could have won the game at the end of regulation.

Before Payton made public his decision to sit Brees, the quarterback said setting the completions percentage record would be "a big deal, but any passing record like that is a big deal."

"You're not keeping track of that as the game goes on like, 'Hey, I've thrown two incompletions here in a row so I need to catch up by throwing six straight completions,'" Brees explained. "But from an efficiency standpoint ... there's something to that number in regards to how it shows the efficiency of your offense or your passing game."

Brees will be listed as the Saints' third quarterback, behind Brunell and rookie Chase Daniel. The Times-Picayune first reported the move and the coach confirmed it to The Associated Press in an e-mail Saturday.

Daniel was signed from the Saints' practice squad to the active roster and the club waived veteran cornerback Mike McKenzie, according to a transaction posted on the team's Web site.

McKenzie's removal from the active roster raised the prospects of cornerback Jabari Greer returning from his sports hernia for one game before the Saints begin preparations for the playoffs. Greer has missed the last seven games and said he was ready and wanted to play this weekend.

Cubs agree with Marlon Byrd on $15M, 3-year deal

CHICAGO (AP)—The Cubs found the center fielder they'd been searching for, agreeing Thursday to a $15 million, three-year contract with Marlon Byrd.

And the Cubs are hoping to have more success with this former Texas Rangers outfielder than the one they signed last offseason - Milton Bradley.

Byrd hit .283 with 20 homers and 89 RBIs last season for Texas. He will take over in center from Kosuke Fukudome, who will move to right field full-time after the trade of the troubled Bradley to Seattle.

A career .279 hitter with 60 homers and 335 RBIs in 785 major league games with Philadelphia, Washington and Texas, Byrd will be reunited with former Texas and current Cubs hitting coach Rudy Jaramillo. In three seasons working with Jaramillo in Texas, Byrd batted .295 with 40 homers and 212 RBIs.

"When I knew I had the opportunity to become a Cub, I was really hoping that this would be my landing ground," Byrd said during a conference call with reporters, adding that rejoining Jaramillo made it even better.

"I really enjoyed my last three years with Rudy. I'm very comfortable with him. As you guys have heard over and over again, he is the best in the business. Especially with Rudy and me being close and having that relationship, it's going to work with him another three years."

Byrd gets $3 million next year, $5.5 million in 2011 and $6.5 million in 2012. He will pretty much replace Bradley, whose signed a $30 million, three-year deal with the Cubs and lasted only one contentious season.

Bradley hit .257 with 40 RBIs and was suspended the final two weeks of the season by general manager Jim Hendry after criticizing the atmosphere surrounding the Cubs.

"I haven't talked to him, as far as baseball, I haven't talked to him since during the season. We tried to go over things as far as what was going on with his swing," Byrd said of Bradley. "But the bit thing about me and Milton is we have a relationship off the field, so I love Milton Bradley, and I'm a little biased when it comes to him. I think he's a great guy. I'm going to talk to him today about coming here. I'm sure he's happy, too. ... He's going to another place to get a fresh start. It's a thing of the past."

Angry Pacquiao strikes back at Mayweathers

BOXING

MANILA, Philippines—A furious Manny Pacquiao lashed back at the Mayweathers and executives of Golden Boy Promotions, who were blaming him for the snafu that sidetracked negotiations for his March 13 megafight with Floyd Jr.

"I can't believe these guys can lie without batting an eyelash and they would even make it appear that I am the culprit for the delay of the fight and saying that I don't want it to happen," Pacquiao told Philboxing.com in Filipino.

"Liars go to hell. They should be man enough and own up to their words," added Pacquiao, who showed proof that Mayweather Jr. had accused him of using performance enhancement drugs.

Pacquiao, who was named by BoxingScene as its 2009 Fighter of the Year, the third time in four years the Filipino was accorded the honor, said the Mayweathers (Floyd Jr., Floyd Sr. and Roger), had claimed in past interviews that he was into some kind of "roids" (steroids).

"It's all over the Internet. They all went on record and there is no denying as to who is lying or not," said Pacquiao, the world's pound-for-pound king.

Pacquiao said the black propaganda is aimed at systematically besmirching, tarnishing and destroying his legacy as one of the best fighters of all time.

What incensed Pacquiao further was an audio recording in October, where Floyd Jr. maliciously imputed that the Philippines is a producer of the best PEDs.

Pacquiao said Floyd Jr. and those who are guilty need to get punished, whether it be in the courts or in the ring.

He stressed that a lawsuit will be filed against his detractors whether or not his fight with Floyd Jr. will push through in Las Vegas.

Team Mayweather and Golden Boy Promotions want Pacquiao to undergo a new set of drug testing procedures other than those already required by the Nevada State Athletic Commission. ***(PDI)***

ROLLERS

From Page 28

with less than 40 seconds left in the game.

Rollers A sued for time and Tom Pangelinan and Rainier Deleon Guerrero joined forces in the team's offensive set. Jomar Danas made an inbound and passed the leather to Zack Tudela, who then gave the ball to Pangelinan. Pangelinan drew Sonics defense, but before getting clobbered, he saw Deleon Guerrero cutting from the left wing and made the pass with the latter canning an undergoal stab.

After nailing a basket that increased Rollers A's lead to five, 57-52, Deleon Guerrero held his ground against a driving Tristan Ecalnea, who hurried a shot and missed. Three straight points from Brandon Aulerio ended the Sonics' hopes for a come-from-behind win.

The Sonics threatened Rollers A several times, but Aulerio's triples save the day for the even-tual champion. After the Sonics closed the gap at five, 39-44, Aulerio drilled a trey to halt the rally. The Sonics again inched closer, 43-49, but Aulerio buried another triple to widen the gap, 52-43, going into the last two minutes of the game.

In the girls division, Mixed Plate and Hopwood 1 topped the 18-and-under, and 14-and-under age group, respectively.

Hopwood 1 showed no love lost to sister team Lady Hilitais, notching a 63-17 triumph.

Hopwood 1 held the Lady Hilitais to four points in the first half and led 18 at the break, 22-4, to cruise to the easy title win.

In the girls' 18-and-under finals, Mercedes Mesa scored 12 of her 14 points in the second half to lift Mixed Plate to a 44-38 victory over the MHS Dolphins.

Mesa tallied 10 of Mixed Plate's last 14 points, as she and Nicole Lebria kept the team afloat. Mixed Plate was ahead by only three, 39-36, going into the final two minutes of the match when Nicole Lebria hit a triple to give their team more breathing space.

MHS made only a field goal in the ensuing plays to settle for a bridesmaid finish.

Girls 14

Hopwood 1 63 – G. Castillo 25, Ocampo 16, Gutierrez 8, J. Castillo 6, Lumabi 4, Morales 2.

Lady Hilitais 17 – Nekaifes 8, Spis 7, Ngirbabul 2.

Scoring by halves: 22-4, 63-17.

Boys 14

Rollers A 48 –Macaranas 14, Limes, 11, De Guzman 11, Dela Rosa 8, Mancao 4.

Lil' Sonics 42—Aranda 14, Salem 12, Villanueva 10, Alegre 4, Escalada 2.

Scoring by halves: 27-28, 48-42.

Girls 18

Mixed Plate 44 – Mesa 16, N. Lebria 14, Duenas 7, Diaz 4, K. Lebria 4.

MHS 38 – Guzman 12, Pagarao 12, Benavente 5, Palaro 4, Mendoza 3, Wonenberg 2.

Scoring by halves: 25-20, 44-38.

Boys 18

Rollers A 58 – Aulerio 13, Talalemoto 12, Tudela 10, Namelo 6, Hambrose 6, Torres 3, L. Reyes 2, Deleon Guerrero 2.

Sonics 52 – Galarse 18, Ajoste 10, Ecalnea 9, Cadiang 6, Jeon 4, Iglecias 1.

Scoring by halves: 28-18, 58-52.

NATIBU

From Page 28

a three-run homer in the first inning, while centerfielder Ken Kalen and shortstop Dustin Quitano contributed two RBIs each.

Calikano-Falcons dropped to a 1-3 record in the team standings in the 21-squad league, as the best it could do was reached second base at the bottom of the second inning. Leftfielder Darren Pua singled and later advanced to second on a Keoni Pua sacrifice fly. With two outs and fourth batter Emoa Iguel sprinting to first, Darre ran to third, but was tagged out by Quitano.

SaiPal 11, Advance 6

Also improving to a perfect 4-0 record was SaiPal, which outclassed Advance X-Terminators, 11-6.

Pitcher Gloyd Martin was only 1-for-3 at the plate, but had three RBIs. He drilled a two-run homer in the third and a sacrifice fly in the first. Leftfielder Lefty Hiro, first baseman Payton Sakuma, and rightfielder Lawrence Dikito added two RBIs each. Dikito was perfect at the plate, going 3-for-3, and made a triple and a solo homer in the second inning.

Saipal's 4-0 record kept the team at second place, tying Natibu. Island Rebels are leading the league with a 5-0 mark.

Advance is at the bottom of the team standings with only one win to show against four losses.

Blazers 24, Fuegu 9

In the third game of the night, the Blazers' guns were blazing in their 24-9 triumph over Fuegu.

Shortstop JP Flores and pitcher Jess Taitano led the Blazers' win, recording six RBIs each. Flores was perfect at the plate with his 4-for-4 clip, scored two runs, and made one triple and a round-tripper. Taitano had back-to-back two-run homers and was 3-for-4 at bat.

Third baseman Joe Taitano contributed three RBIs and scored two runs on a 2-for-4 performance at the plate, while leftfielder Ralph Magofna was spotless at the plate with his 4-for-4 clip. Magofna added two doubles and one triple and scored four runs.

ADVANCE

From Page 28

quarter, while Estolas chipped in 19. Ol'Aces' 1-2 punch, Dan Barcinas and Peter Iguel, tallied 27 and 16 markers, respectively.

In the frontline, Advance had a slight edge with the trio of Junar Guiab, Jorge De Guzman, and Kelvin Fitial combining for 33 points against the 30 of Jack Lizama, Gabriel White, and Romeo Iginoef.

Fans who looked forward for the exciting clash between the then co-leaders were treated to a show as Advance and Ol'Aces had a nip-and-tuck game in the first half.

Pelisamen made seven points in the first period to give Advance a 22-16 lead, but Ol'Aces grabbed the driver's seat midway in the second canto behind Barcinas and Lizama's baskets.

However, the X-Terminatos regained the upper hand in the third quarter, 72-68, with Estolas canning two triples and scoring 10 markers and Guiab firing 11 of his total points in that canto.

Pelisamen ended the third period with a 3-point play and kept his momentum in the fourth, cashing on layups that foiled Ol'Aces' repeated comeback bids. Pelisamen drew help from Guiab and Estolas, who combined for 10 points in the final canto.

Barcinas, who had already scored 20 points after three quarters, made Ol'Aces' first four points in the fourth quarter, but went cold in the ensuing minutes of the game. Iguel scored six straight markers in the fourth, but couldn't save Ol'Aces in the end, as he fouled out in the closing minutes of the match.

Lizama was also non-factor in the fourth, as he was held scoreless in that quarter. Romeo Iginoef, who had earned 10 markers after three periods, was without a basket, too in the final canto, as he got into foul trouble.

In the first game, Noni Saipan thrashed Trinity Estate, 89-67.

It was Noni Saipan's third win in five games, tying the team for third place with Prospects. Trinity remained winless in five outings.

Noni Saipan drew double figures from four players to notch an easy win. Kae Bernardo scored 21 points, Wowie Abuel chipped in 19, and Sonny Lerio and Jun Pantaleon added 16 and 10, respectively.

August Loste top-scored for Trinity with 21 points.

First Game

Noni Saipan 89 – Bernardo 21, Abuel 19, Lerio 16, Pantaleon 10, Tamayo 7, Demapan 5.

Trinity Estate 67 –A. Loste 21, Herrera 18, Felipe 8, J. Loste 6, Hernandez 4, Manuel 2, Santos 2, Valiente 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-8, 46-37, 70-54, 89-67.

Second Game

Advance 98 – Pelisamen 34, Estolas 19, Guiab 19, Guzman 7, Fitial 7, Muleta 3, Opone 2, Gapor 1.

Ol'Aces 91 – Barcinas 27, Iguel 16, Lizama 13, Iginoef 10,Tumaquip 9, White 7, Olaitiman 2, Camacho 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-16, 41-46, 72-68, 98-91.

MAZDA

From Page 28

quet after the event. Check-in time for the fundraiser is at 6am, while tee-off is set for 7am.

Proceeds from the tournament, which will have a double-peoria format, will be used for the operational costs of the 2010 season of the SLLB.

"Operational costs to include payment of player's accident insurance and charter fees through Little League International, payment of usage fees, and procurement of baseballs and trophies. Because of a new rule on safety issues implemented a couple of years ago, the league is mandated to purchase replaceable bases—the break-away type of bases that lessen injuries suffered by players while sliding. Also, the league must use a double-base at first base to replace the standard single base," Rogolifoi said.

The SLLB will kick off its 2010 season on Feb. 13 and Rogolifoi is reminding interested teams and individuals to attend the general membership meeting on Jan. 6 at 6pm at the pavilion behind the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

"Important matters to be discussed include the baseball field rehabilitation timeline, opening date, league charter, player accident insurance, and ground rules. Workshops for interested umpires, statisticians/scorekeepers and CPR are also on the agenda. Managers and coaches are reminded that all player registration, medical release, and volunteer forms distributed earlier must be filled out, signed, and submitted along with all necessary documents at this meeting or by the Jan. 13 deadline," Rogolifoi said.

For donations or to sponsor holes for the SLLB golf tournament, contact Rose Igitol at 287-1129, or Walter Macaranas at 483-9258. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo).***

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	24	8	.750	–
Toronto	16	18	.471	9
New York	13	20	.394	11 1/2
Philadelphia	9	23	.281	15
New Jersey	3	30	.091	21 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	24	9	.727	–
Atlanta	21	11	.656	2 1/2
Miami	16	15	.516	7
Charlotte	13	18	.419	10
Washington	10	21	.323	13

Central Division

Cleveland	27	8	.771	–
Chicago	14	17	.452	11
Milwaukee	13	18	.419	12
Detroit	11	21	.344	14 1/2
Indiana	10	22	.313	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	23	10	.697	–
San Antonio	20	11	.645	2
Houston	20	14	.588	3 1/2
Memphis	16	16	.500	6 1/2
New Orleans	15	16	.484	7

Northwest Division

Denver	21	12	.636	–
Portland	22	13	.629	–
Oklahoma City	18	15	.545	3
Utah	18	15	.545	3
Minnesota	7	28	.200	15

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	26	6	.813	–
Phoenix	21	13	.618	6
L.A. Clippers	14	18	.438	12
Sacramento	14	19	.424	12 1/2
Golden State	9	23	.281	17

Yesterday's Games

Cleveland 94, New Jersey 86
Charlotte 107, Miami 97
Indiana 122, Minnesota 111
San Antonio 97, Washington 86
Boston 103, Toronto 96
Chicago 101, Orlando 93
New Orleans 99, Houston 95
Milwaukee 103, Oklahoma City 97, OT
Denver 105, Utah 95
Memphis 128, Phoenix 103
Dallas 99, Sacramento 91
Portland 105, Golden State 89

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Bryant, LAL	32	362	218	980	30.6
Anthony, DEN	32	331	272	961	30.0
James, CLE	34	343	239	982	28.9
Durant, OKC	32	309	250	911	28.5
Wade, MIA	30	272	220	788	26.3
Ellis, GOL	31	313	149	791	25.5
Nowitzki, DAL	31	280	192	776	25.0
Bosh, TOR	33	269	240	784	23.8
Roy, POR	33	270	169	756	22.9
Arenas, WAS	30	237	145	680	22.7
Johnson, ATL	32	272	102	699	21.8
Gay, MEM	29	230	127	608	21.0
Stoudemire, PHX	33	257	161	675	20.5
Kaman, LAC	32	273	105	651	20.3
Evans, SAC	28	212	130	569	20.3
Randolph, MEM	31	253	118	627	20.2
Duncan, SAN	28	222	113	557	19.9
Williams, UTA	30	216	123	592	19.7
Jennings, MIL	30	215	94	585	19.5
Boozer, UTA	32	247	125	619	19.3

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	148	230	.643
Howard, ORL	179	290	.617
Gasol, MEM	176	287	.613
Horford, ATL	188	317	.593
Hilario, DEN	165	287	.575
Lee, NYK	255	445	.573
Landry, HOU	194	342	.567
Stoudemire, PHX	257	454	.566
O'Neal, MIA	146	259	.564
Millsap, UTA	136	243	.560

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	32	116	310	426	13.3
Noah, CHI	30	123	251	374	12.5
Wallace, CHA	29	66	284	350	12.1
Randolph, MEM	31	148	206	354	11.4
Camby, LAC	31	88	266	354	11.4
Bosh, TOR	33	109	263	372	11.3
Lee, NYK	33	79	279	358	10.8
Boozer, UTA	32	64	273	337	10.5
Haywood, WAS	30	125	185	310	10.3
Duncan, SAN	28	84	203	287	10.3

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	33	368	11.2
Paul, NOR	22	233	10.6
Williams, UTA	30	295	9.8
Rondo, BOS	31	298	9.6
Kidd, DAL	32	289	9.0
James, CLE	34	266	7.8
B. Davis, LAC	32	250	7.8
Westbrook, OKC	32	228	7.1
Arenas, WAS	30	207	6.9
Duhon, NYK	33	213	6.5

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

UBA STANDINGS

Advance	5	0
Ol'Aces	4	1
Prospect	3	2
Noni Saipan	3	2
Diamond	2	3
Hoopaholics	2	3
Cholos	1	4
Trinity	0	5

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Island Rebels	5	0
Natibu	4	0
SaiPal	4	0
Chura	3	1
Man Amigos	3	1
6-Pack	3	1
San Roque	2	1
Red Eye	2	1
Blazers	2	1
Ur Balls	2	2
Freedom Air Flyers	2	2
Hitz	2	2
Team Familia	1	2
Berdax	1	2
Calikano-Falcons	1	3
Lancheros	1	3
Go For Broke	1	3
Team Fuegu	1	4
Ramblers	1	4
X-Terminators	0	4
G-Ballers	0	4

The Week in Sports

No holiday break for sports

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

While most of people on the island took a break during the holiday season, several CNMI athletes were still doing their thing.

One of them were the Commonwealth's junior tennis players, who were in Guam for four days to compete in the 2009 Guam Junior Open Championships played at the Ninete Tennis Centre in Hagatna.

CNMI coach Jeff Race brought 26 players in Guam with Tinian-based netter Benjie Decena preventing a CNMI shutout after winning the boys' 18-and-under single and doubles competitions.

Joining Decena in Guam were Tammy Ackerman, Amy Arenovski, Jeane Bracken, Chris Cajigan, Tommy Choi, Ilia Corella, Benjie Decena, Carl Dela Cruz, Jodel Fernandez, Adele Hudkins, Angelo, Emily, Rafael, and Michael Jones, Jake Lee, Mikayla Lopez, Clay McCullough-Stearns, Christian Miller, Theecel Minor, Andy, Lucas, and Nathan Nutting, Gabrielle Race, Colin and Quintin Ramsey, and Negahr Rastguiy.

Thea Minor was with sister Theecel on a trip to Guam, but the former only made a stopover en route to Melbourne, Australia.

Thea went to the Land Down Under to be with the Pacific Oceania Team and compete in three tournaments. The Hopwood Junior High School student's first tournament will be the Shepparton netfest in Victoria. The event started on Jan. 2 and will run until 6, a day after Minor and the rest of the Pacific Ocenia Team completed a two-day camp in Albury.

From Shepparton, Minor and company will go to Albury, New South Wales for the 2009 Post Margaret Court Cup, which will take place from Jan. 7 to 12. The 14-year-old netter's last tournament will be the 2009 Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships in Wodonga from Jan. 13 to 17.

From Victoria, Thea will visit Melbourne to watch preliminary games in the Australian Open.

Back in local events, Docomo foiled IT&E's attempt for a return trip to the finals, after beating its corporate rival in the battle for the last finals seat in the 2009 IT&E Inter Government/ Business Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Docomo capitalized on a depleted IT&E crew to seize control of their do-or-die game early en route to an 81-68 victory. The win advanced Docomo to the finals against Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

IT&E, which won the 2008 edition of the competition, missed a chance to defend its title after it played in the make-or-break game without its key players. Bruce Berline and Elmer Esdrelon did not play in the first period where Docomo led, 36-10. Darwin Barbo and Ryan Sanciangco also missed the entire game.

Esdrelon and Berline failed to suit up for IT&E as they decided to play for Diamond Fixers in the UBA caging at the Garapan Basketball Court after their game against Docomo started late.

Diamond Fixers went on to lose against Prospects after Berline and Esdrelon left at the end of the first quarter. In other results, Hoopaholics won over Cholos, while Advance X-Terminators prevailed in the battle of undefeated teams, downing Ol'Aces.

Still in basketball, the 2009 Annual Youth Christmas Hoop Fest kicked off last week at the Ada gym with competitions in the boys'11-and-under/girls-14 -and-under, boys'14-and-under, and girls' and boys' 18-and-under divisions.

Rollers went on to dominate the Christmas caging, winning the boys' 11-and-under, 14-and-under, and 18-and-under divisions.

Hopwood 1 ruled the girls' 14-and-under age group, while Mixed Plate topped the girls' 18-and-under division.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mixed Plate's Mercedes Mesa beats MHS players for the rebound during their game in the Christmas caging on Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Prospects' Jeff Pagarao goes for a reversed layup against Diamond Fixers' Bruce Berline during their game in the UBA caging at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Rollers and Hopwood Oldies players in action during their 14-and-under game in the Christmas caging at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Thea Minor, seen here in action in a local tournament, left Saipan for Australia last week to compete in three tournaments.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Docomo's Kae Bernardo, right, is fouled by IT&E's Edsel Mendoza during their make-or-break game in the government/business caging last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Hoopaholics' Gus Camacho drives against a Cholos defender during their game in the UBA caging at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Benjie Decena, seen here returning a shot to Peter Loyola during last year's Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, won the boys' 18-and-under title in the 2009 Guam Junior Open Championships last week at the Ninete Tennis Centre in Hagatna.

No holiday break for sports

While most of people on the island took a break during the holiday season, several CNMI athletes were still doing their thing.

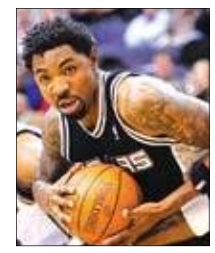
27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Spurs beat Wizards 97-86 for 5th straight win

The San Antonio Spurs defeated the slumping Washington Wizards 97-86 for their season-best fifth straight NBA victory on Saturday.

24



Rollers reign in Christmas caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2009 Annual Youth Christmas Hoop Fest belonged to Rollers Basketball Club, which claimed three championships after five days of competition at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Rollers' 11-and-under team, Badu, gave RBC its first championship, as no other squad was entered in that age group. Badu played against three other 14-and-under teams, but results of these games were not counted in the team standings.

Rollers A made it two in a row for RBC, as it ruled the boys' 14-and-under division, pulling off a 48-42 upset over erstwhile champion Lil' Sonics.

Stacy Macaranas led Rollers A's title win, notching 14 points. He scored three of the team's last seven points to dethrone the Lil' Sonics. Angelo Limes and John De Guzman also helped Rollers A's cause, chipping in 11 apiece.

In the centerpiece boys' 18-and-under division finals, Rollers A survived Sonics' rally to eke out a 58-52 victory.

Rollers A controlled the game in the first half before Sonics made repeated comeback bids in the second half. Sonics cut the lead to as low as three, 52-55,

See ROLLERS on Page 26

Members of Rollers A flash the No. 1 sign after winning in the boys' 18-and-under finals of the Christmas caging against the Southern Sonics on Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

2010 Mazda at stake in SLLB golf fundraiser

A 2010 Mazda 3-I 4-door hatchback sedan will be among the hole-in-one prizes in the 2010 Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. Golf Fundraising Tournament that will hit the greens and fairways of Laolao Bay Golf Resort on Jan. 30.

SLLB president Tony Rogolifoi said the hole-in-one prize is from Triple J Motors and the car has an estimated worth of $19,000.

Besides the car, Rogolifoi added, cash prizes donated by Tan Holdings, Pacific Trading Co., Saipan Shipping Co., and Marianas Insurance will be given to hole-in-one winners in corresponding par-3 holes. Other sponsors of the one-day tournament are Freedom Air, Duty Free Shoppers Ltd., Budget Rent-A-Car, Laolao Bay Golf Resort, Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel, I-Connect, Saipan Grand Hotel, Fiesta Resort, Pacific Islands Club, Taro Sue Store, Dolphins Wholesale, Michael White, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Marianas Printing.

Golfers wishing to join the tournament to be played on the west course of the Kagman facility must pay the entrance fee of $95, which covers greens free and admission to the ban-

See MAZDA on Page 26

Natibu shuts out Calikano

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The undefeated Natibu recorded the first shut out win in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League, following its 21-0 demolition of Calikano-Falcons, on Wednesday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

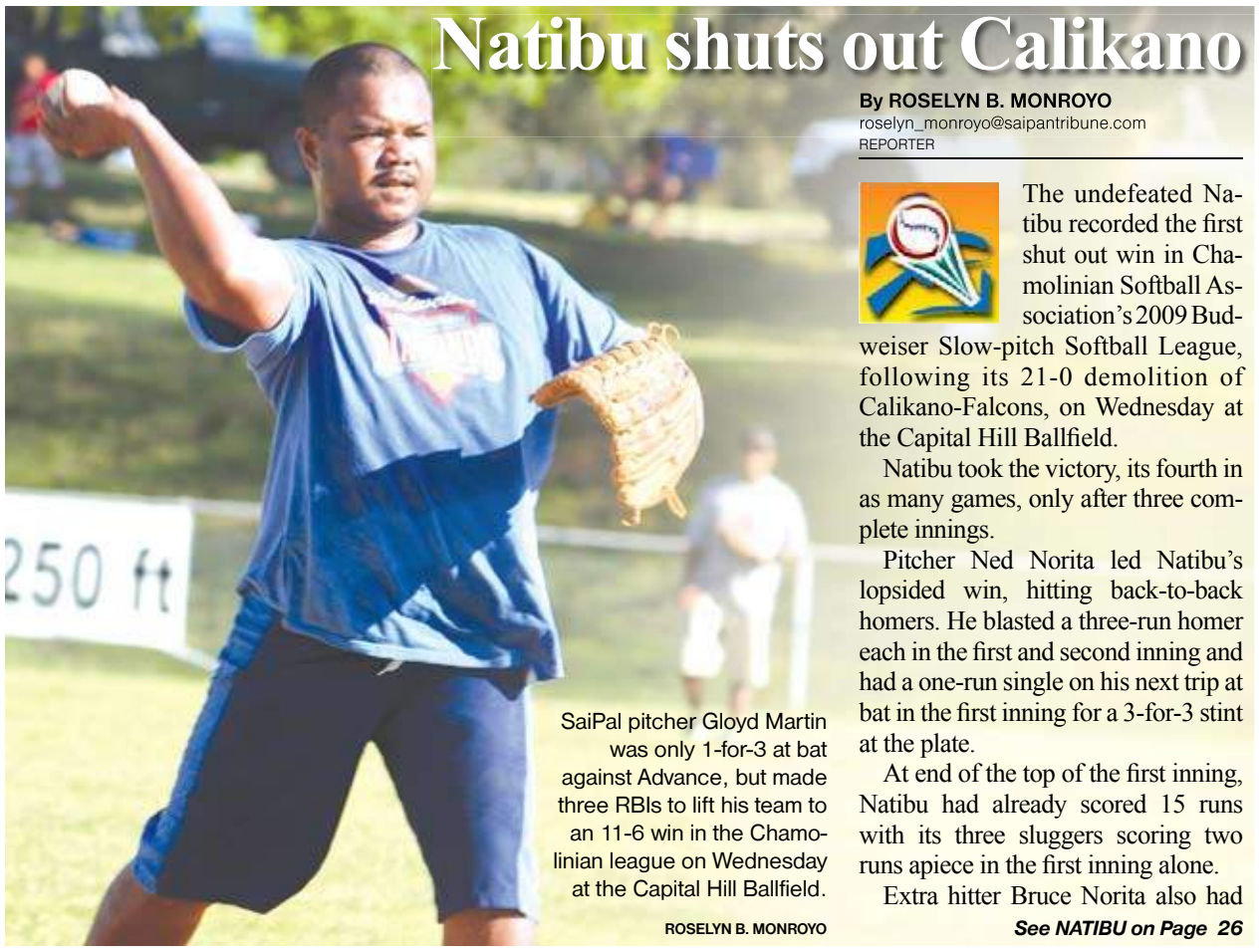
Natibu took the victory, its fourth in as many games, only after three complete innings.

Pitcher Ned Norita led Natibu's lopsided win, hitting back-to-back homers. He blasted a three-run homer each in the first and second inning and had a one-run single on his next trip at bat in the first inning for a 3-for-3 stint at the plate.

At end of the top of the first inning, Natibu had already scored 15 runs with its three sluggers scoring two runs apiece in the first inning alone.

Extra hitter Bruce Norita also had

See NATIBU on Page 26



SaiPal pitcher Gloyd Martin was only 1-for-3 at bat against Advance, but made three RBIs to lift his team to an 11-6 win in the Chamolinian league on Wednesday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Advance lone unbeaten team in UBA

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Advance earned the distinction of being the only undefeated team in the ongoing Inaugural 2009 UBA/Miller Lite Men's Basketball League, following its 98-91 win over Ol'Aces on Wednesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Both teams came into Wednesday's night match unbeaten in four games and only the X-Terminators managed to extend their winning run to five as the backcourt duo of Freddie Pelisamen and Jun Estolas outgunned their counterparts.

Pelisamen exploded for 34 points, including 13 in the crucial fourth

See ADVANCE on Page 26

Advance X-Terminators' Kelvin Fitial bulldozes his way against the defense of Ol'Aces' Elias Rangamar during the battle of unbeaten teams in the UBA caging on Wednesday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO